

**“We saw how life was going in Hanover Park and none of
us wanted that life for ourselves:”**

**Exploring resilience factors in the life narratives of
community-engaged youth.**

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PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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ABSTRACT

This study explored resilience factors within the life narratives of adolescents who live in a low-socioeconomic, high-violence community and have become long-standing members of a community youth development programme. Twenty youth were interviewed, ten girls and ten boys. A thematic analysis was conducted which revealed eight resilience characteristics common to the majority of the participants. These were: intelligence and academic achievement; insight; personal agency; determination and self-discipline; empathy; hope; future orientation; and religious faith. A second category of themes concerned the social support received by participants, from their mothers, teachers, adult mentors and friends. Forms of social support included material support; interest and encouragement; high expectations of success; guidance and boundary setting; role models for determination, strength and agency; and counselling. The motivational factors which influenced the participants to join the programme were also explored, as well as the factors which sustained their long-term involvement. An interpretation of the process of resilience in the participants' lives is offered, highlighting the relationship between the presence of strong maternal attachment bonds and positive adult role models which influence the development of the resilience factors, which, in turn, lead to confidence, optimism for the future and a strong sense of personal agency, all of which contribute to the formation of a community activist identity for the participants. Some recommendations for policy regarding community youth programmes and for future research are discussed.

Keywords: resilience; youth; community engagement; life narratives

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In communities all over the world, children grow up with exposure to high levels of violence of all kinds. Some researchers have argued that young people are being “incubated in terror” through a variety of traumatic experiences, including community violence, sexual assault, domestic abuse, verbal abuse and neglect (Perry, 1997, p. 26). Violence and crime rates are especially high in inner-city, low socioeconomic communities, where young people often live in a constant state of hyper-vigilance and nearly every person has been a victim of, or witness to, some form of violence (Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, Hamby, & Kracke, 2008; Lynch, 2003; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1998; Margolin & Gordis, 2000).

High prevalence rates of exposure to violence have been found amongst youth in South Africa. As a result of South Africa’s history of inequality in terms of employment and education, today a large percentage of the country now live in conditions of extreme poverty and deprivation (Leibbrandt, Woolard, & Finn, 2010; Statistics South Africa, 2011). People living in poorer communities have been estimated to be eighty times more likely to be exposed to violence than people living in wealthier areas (Hamber, 1999). South African studies have shown that communities where families live with the stressful conditions associated with poverty also often have high rates of child physical, emotional and sexual abuse and child neglect (Fincham, Altes, Stein, & Seedat, 2009; Shields, Nadasen, & Pierce, 2008).

The 2005 South African National Youth Victimization Survey found the Western Cape to be amongst the top three provinces with regard to the prevalence of family violence, with 25 percent of participants reporting incidences (Leoschut & Burton, 2006). Regarding differences among race groups, prevalence of domestic violence was found to be highest amongst coloured participants (33.2%). In their recent study with young, coloured adolescents in Cape Town, Kaminer and colleagues found that 76.9 percent of their participants had witnessed domestic violence, 58.6 percent had been directly victimized at home, 98 percent had witnessed violence in the neighbourhood, and three quarters had been exposed to violence at school (Kaminer, du Plessis, Hardy, & Benjamin, 2013). Fincham and colleagues (2009) found that black and coloured adolescents experienced significantly more

exposure to trauma and community violence than white adolescents of the same age, and the highest rates of homicide are reported amongst men and women who under apartheid were classified as 'coloured' or of mixed racial heritage (Altbeker, 2008). Therefore, many young people in South Africa, particularly coloured and black youth in low socio-economic communities in the Western Cape, face exposure to multiple forms of victimizations as witnesses and victims across home, neighbourhood and school settings, leaving them with virtually no safe spaces (Leoschut, & Burton, 2006; Seedat, Van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla, & Ratele, 2009; Shields et al., 2008).

Exposure to high levels of violence has been found to have long lasting effects on an individual's mental health and behaviour (Finkelhor et al., 2008; Lynch, 2003; McCabe, Lucchini, Hough, Yeh, & Hazen, 2005). Particularly, young people's trust in others and hope for a positive future can be at risk (Lynch & Cicchetti, 1998). Mental health symptoms such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress have been found to develop as a result of high levels of violence exposure, as well as aggressive behaviour and conduct disorder (Cooley-Quille, Boyd, Frantz & Walsh, 2001; Fitzpatrick, & Boldizar, 1993; Fowler, Tompsett, Braciszewski, Jacques-Tiura, & Baltes, 2009; Ludwig & Warren, 2009; Rosario, Salzinger, Feldman, & Ng-Mak, 2008). Children who live in high-violence communities are highly likely to be exposed to multiple forms of violence, increasing their vulnerability to developing trauma-related sequelae (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2007). South African research has found that young people in low-socioeconomic, high-violence communities who are being exposed to high levels of violence, are demonstrating high rates of symptoms of PTSD (Barbarin, Richter, & De Wet, 2001; Fincham et al., 2009; Seedat, van Nood, Vythilingum, Stein, & Kaminer, 2000; Seedat, Nymai, Njenga, Vythilingum, & Stein, 2004; Ward, Flisher, Zissis, Muller, & Lombard, 2001), depression and anxiety (Ward et al., 2001; Ward, Martin, Theron, & Distiller, 2007).

However, research has found that some children who are exposed to violence do not develop psychological and behavioural disorders but appear to adapt well and maintain healthy functioning (Bonano, 2004; Garmezy, 1991; Masten, 2007). Research examining individuals demonstrating these outcomes has identified several resilience factors. These factors include personal qualities, family characteristics and social support from friends and family. Research has also explored the community and cultural elements which support individuals in their unique contexts. A recent focus in the resilience field is on exploring the interaction between these various levels of supportive factors and how they combine to produce the wide variety

of responses to living in conditions of multiple adversity. This focus necessitates the examination of individuals within their particular contexts, and the exploration of the broad range of influences on their lives, preferably from the point of view of their own understanding, to gain a better understanding of the interaction of these factors to produce healthy adaptations.

1.1 Rationale

The motivation to conduct this research emerged initially from the researcher's personal interest but then was augmented by her recognition of the real need for research to help fill the gap in the field of South African youth resilience studies. Currently, there are no published South African studies examining the factors which participants in youth development organizations in high-violence areas might have in common, however, in her recently published synthesis of studies of resilience in South African youth, Theron (2012) emphasises the importance of research which looks at the influences of culture and community context on young people's resilient outcomes as well as the crucial need to provide information on existing interventions which augment South African youth's resilience. The present study aims to assist in this regard by identifying resilience factors that are common across the life stories of young people involved in a positive youth development programme within a small, grassroots organisation in a low-income, high violence residential area of Cape Town.

The researcher was involved as the co-coordinator of the youth development programme at CASE organization in Hanover Park, in Cape Town, in 2008 and became interested in the youth members' individual stories and reasons for becoming involved in the programme. Many of the youth had been members of the CASE 'Youth-in-Action' programme for a few years or more and actively voiced their enjoyment of the activities and their passion for the community work of the organization. The researcher's interest was piqued by observing some similarities in the youth's thinking and common experiences which influenced them to become involved. The researcher was also involved in the recruitment of young people from high schools in the area to join the youth programme and was interested to see which youth would become involved when the vast majority were not interested, and desired to understand what the involved youth had in common. An understanding of the factors which encourage youth to help themselves would add to the knowledge of what supports resilient outcomes in

youth in contexts of multiple adversity. Identifying common themes in the life narratives of a sample of community engaged youth within a community experiencing multiple adversities may be able to shed further light on this question.

1.2 Research Aims

The study aims to explore resilience factors, and the interaction between them, within the life narratives of adolescents who live in a low-socioeconomic, high-violence community and have become long-standing members of a community youth development programme.

1.3 Thesis Structure

Chapter Two outlines the psychological impact on young people of chronic exposure to violence, and is followed by a review of the literature on factors which promote resilient outcomes for some youth in these contexts. The literature review argues for the relevance of this study by indicating that there is a gap in South African research on influences which promote resilient outcomes in children and adolescents growing up in high-violence communities. Following this, Chapter Three details the research design, methods of data collection, data analysis and the ethical considerations of the study. Chapter Four then presents the findings of this study. The fifth and final chapter describes the conclusions and limitations of this study and offers recommendations for future South African research into adolescent resilience in high-violence communities.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter starts by reviewing local and international literature on the negative mental health effects on children and adolescents of being exposed to an environment of chronic violence. This will be followed by an exploration of the literature on the individual, familial and community factors which promote resilient outcomes for children and adolescents living in situations of violence and multiple adversity.

2.1 The Impact of Exposure to Violence on the Mental Health of Children and Adolescents

The fact that children and adolescents are not fully developed in their minds and bodies makes them particularly vulnerable to the impact of violent trauma (Garbarino, 1993). Adolescence brings many developmental tasks to negotiate, and having to cope with traumatic experiences may interfere with the normal developmental path. Violence is of a different nature than other traumatic experiences, such as chronic illness or natural disaster, as experiences of violence often destabilize a victim's trust in other people and may put their hope for a positive future at risk. Many studies have shown that trauma early on in life can have a long terms effect on personality, mental health and behaviour (Finkelhor et al., 2008; Lynch, 2003; McCabe et al., 2005). The consequences of exposure to violence for children and adolescents can be divided into two categories of effects: internalising and externalising symptoms. Internalising symptoms refer to cognitive and emotional effects and externalising symptoms refer to the effects of violence exposure on behaviour.

The most proximal form of violence exposure is domestic abuse of the child, as this directly impacts upon the child by taking away the closest resource for safety and protection, the relationship of trust between the parent and the child (McCabe et al., 2005). Particularly in a violent community, children need a family environment of trust and safety where they can relax their guard. Violence between the adults in the home or toward children in the home erodes the child's trust in their caregivers and the child's belief that the parents or guardians are able to protect them from harm (McCabe et al., 2005). A child can interpret experiencing violence to mean that not only is the world unsafe but that he or she is "unworthy of being kept safe" (Lynch & Cicchetti, 1998, p. 255). These attitudes can lead to negative self-

perceptions, depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress symptoms (Cooley-Quille, Boyd, Frantz, & Walsh, 2001; Margolin & Gordis, 2000; Turner, Finkelhor, & Ormrod, 2006).

Like those who experience domestic violence, adolescents who witness community violence are at an increased risk for mental health problems, including internalizing symptoms such as anxiety and depression (Cooley-Quille et al., 2001; Fitzpatrick, Piko, Wright, & LaGory, 2005; Ludwig & Warren, 2009; Rosario et al., 2008), posttraumatic stress (Fehon, Grilo, & Lipshitz, 2001; Hoven et al., 2005; Hunt, Martens, & Belchar, 2011; Rosenthal, 2000), and somatization (Cooley-Quille et al., 2001). Some research indicates that the associations between witnessing community violence and depression and anxiety symptoms are stronger for girls than for boys (Foster, Kuperminc, & Price, 2004; Fowler et al., 2009). However, some studies have not found increased internalising problems in youth exposed to community violence; this may be due to desensitization (Fitzpatrick & Boldizar, 1993; Garbarino, 1995; Osofsky, 1995). In his desensitisation hypothesis, Garbarino (1995) proposed that youth living in high-crime contexts may learn to adapt to violence over time and therefore not experience such high levels of internalisation of symptoms, however, he argued that this process could decrease youths' inhibitions towards behaving violently themselves (Garbarino, 1995). However, it is also possible that the potential negative impact of community violence is moderated by a number of protective or resilience factors, as will be discussed later.

Community violence exposure has also frequently been found to be associated with the development of externalizing behaviours, particularly increased levels of aggression (Brookmeyer, Henrich, Cohen, & Shahrar, 2011; Fowler et al., 2009; Guerra, Tolan, Huesmann, van Acker, & Eron, 1995; Gorman-Smith, Henry, & Tolan, 2004; Schwab-Stone et al., 1999). Similarly, Swartz and Proctor (2000) found that witnessing violence was associated with youth perceptions that aggressive behaviours are appropriate responses to conflict. In a national sample of 3614 adolescents, Zinzow and colleagues (2009) found that witnessed community violence was associated with delinquency and community violence victimisation was associated with substance use. These behaviours may, in turn, increase the likelihood of developing other types of psychological or health problems (Rossman & Rosenberg, 1998). In their longitudinal study of adolescent exposure to chronic violence, Boyd, Cooley, Lambert, and Ialongo (2003) found that symptoms of anxiety may moderate the association between witnessing community violence and subsequent aggressive behaviour. Other researchers support this finding and suggest that shyness, anxiety

and behavioural inhibition may prevent adolescents from participating in dangerous or illegal behaviours, therefore decreasing their risk of exposure to community violence (Walker et al., 1991). Exposure to community violence can also impact a child's scholastic performance (Cooley-Quille et al., 2001; Milam, Furr-Holden, & Leaf, 2010; Voisin, Neilands, & Hunnicut, 2011), which has implications for long-term employability and economic opportunities.

Recent research has focused on the impact on children of exposure to multiple forms of trauma. Researchers have called this phenomenon 'poly-victimisation,' where the same children suffer multiple traumas across different areas of their lives, such as home, school and neighbourhood (Finkelhor et al., 2009; Garbarino, 1993). The results from the 2008 NatSCEV found that children who were exposed to one type of violence were at far greater risk of experiencing other types of violence. For example, a child who was physically abused in the past year would be five times as likely to also have been sexually assaulted (Finkelhor et al., 2009). Studies have consistently found that poly-victimisation creates a higher risk for both internalising and externalising symptoms than single victimisations or repeated exposure to only one kind of violence (Finkelhor et al., 2007; Turner et al., 2006).

South African research regarding the psychological impact of violence exposure on children and adolescents has largely replicated international findings. Studies with samples of high school learners in Cape Town have supported the positive association between exposure to community violence and symptoms of PTSD (Fincham et al., 2009; Seedat et al., 2000, 2004; Ward et al., 2001, 2009), depression (Ward et al., 2001, 2009) and anxiety (Ward et al., 2001) reported by international studies. Anxiety and depression symptoms have often been found to be co-morbid in South African samples of children and adolescents (Barbarin et al., 2001; Seedat et al., 2000, 2004; Suliman et al., 2009; Ward et al., 2001). In their study of school learners in a high violence community, Ward, Martin, Theron, and Distiller (2007) found that both witnessing and victimisation were associated with anxiety and depression, but only victimisation was associated with behaviour difficulties. In their later study with high school learners, Ward and colleagues (2009) found that adolescents who had been exposed to violence perpetrated by someone known to them exhibited higher levels of anxiety as well as more symptoms of PTSD and depression than youth who had witnessed violence between strangers. Suliman and colleagues (2009) sampled 922 grade 10 learners from nine Cape Town high schools and found that children exposed to abuse and neglect were significantly more likely to report symptoms of PTSD, depression and anxiety.

In samples of younger children living in high violence communities, Barbarin and Richter (2001) found that exposure to community violence amongst six-year old children was a significant risk factor for anxiety, depression and aggression. Cluver and Gardner (2006) found that exposure to community violence and household violence (including intimate partner violence and physical and sexual abuse) both predicted PTSD symptoms in their sample of children aged between 10 and 19 years old. With regard to gender, most South African studies show that although males report significantly higher levels of exposure to community violence and abuse than females (Fincham et al., 2009), females experience significantly higher levels of PTSD (Fincham et al., 2009; Seedat et al., 2000; Suliman et al., 2009) and anxiety and depression (Seedat et al., 2000; Suliman et al., 2009) than males.

Most South African studies on the effects of exposure to violence have focused on measuring internalizing symptoms, however some studies have linked exposure to violence with higher levels of aggressive behaviour in children and adolescents (Barbarin & Richter, 2001; Liddel, Kvalsig, Qwuotyana, & Shabalala, 1994; Van der Merwe & Dawes, 2001). Van der Merwe and Dawes (2007) studied a sample of grade 7 children living in a low-income community and found that direct victimisation was related to behavioural problems, but that witnessing violence was not as closely linked to these problems. South African research also indicates that some internalising symptoms may result in the development of externalizing behaviours. For example, anxiety and depression as a result of witnessing or having been victimised by violence may affect adolescents' concentration levels and their school performance. This might increase the likelihood of engaging in risk taking behaviours such as dropping out of high school (Myers et al., 2009; Ward et al., 2009) and unsafe sexual practices and substance abuse (Altbeker, 2008). Living in an environment of high levels of violence may affect children's perceptions of the future, making them feel less certain of a positive outcome and more inclined to indulge in risky behaviours (Ward et al., 2007). Recent South African studies have started to explore the cumulative effect of trauma exposure, indicating that children who suffer multiple traumatic experiences demonstrate an increase in PTSD symptoms and depression (Suliman et al., 2009). Although being directly victimised appears to have the most severe psychological effects on children, witnessing and hearing about violence in their community have also been shown to have an extremely distressing effect on children (Ward et al., 2001). Furthermore, as well as high levels of exposure to violence, South African children are also faced with a range of other adversities such as poverty, high rates of parental deaths due to HIV/AIDS and high levels of familial substance abuse

(Altbeker, 2007; Barbarin, Richter, & De Wet, 2000; Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Cluver & Orkin, 2009; Meintjesa, Halla, Mareraa, & Boulleb, 2010), which may compound the risks posed by high levels of violence exposure.

In conclusion, there is substantial evidence in the literature that children who are abused or witness violence between their parents, and live in a dangerous community where they are surrounded by violence, are at high risk for developing negative mental health and behavioural outcomes. South African studies confirm that exposure to violence is pervasive among young people in this country, with particularly high levels of exposure occurring among youth in the coloured communities of Cape Town (Altbeker, 2007), and that increased violence exposure is associated with an increased risk of both internalising and externalising difficulties. In light of this, international and local researchers have started to explore the factors that help to foster resilience against these negative consequences. The next section will review this resilience research.

2.2 Resilience amongst Children and Adolescents Living in Contexts of Multiple Adversity

As outlined in the previous section, growing up in communities faced with violence and multiple adversities places young people at considerable risk of developing emotional and behavioural problems. However, despite the potential for such negative outcomes, many vulnerable children do not develop significant mental health problems (Masten & Wright, 2010). Child development experts have estimated that around 80 percent of all children who are exposed to highly stressful situations and conditions are not negatively affected in the long-term (Garbarino, Dubrow, Kostelny, & Pardo, 1992) and some children make use of such difficult circumstances to grow stronger (Werner, 1990). The negative outcomes associated with exposure to abuse and violence are therefore clearly not inevitable; it appears that many youth are supported in their positive adjustment by certain protective influences. Researchers have used the term ‘resilient’ to describe people who do not develop serious negative outcomes in the face of adversity.

2.2.1 Origins of research on resilience

Resilience research first became prominent in the 1970s and early 1980s. Researchers were interested in the huge variation in outcome among individuals in groups carrying high risk for

developing problems due to factors such as parental psychopathology, poverty, trauma, or disaster (Garmezy, 1974; Garmezy & Masten, 1994; Werner & Smith, 1982). Early research focused on children traumatized by major disasters, war, extreme poverty and violence (Garmezy, 1983; Rutter, 1985).

Early research first conceptualised resilience as contained in a number of qualities within an individual that were associated with positive outcomes (Garmezy, 1983; Werner & Smith, 1982). Researchers then discovered that factors outside the individual also had a significant impact on an individual's resilience and concluded that resilience was a product of a number of different interacting factors as opposed to certain fixed, personal attributes (Ungar et al., 2007). In studies with large samples of well-adjusted children, certain factors were found to be held in common by many of them, including particular family and school contexts. These protective factors were found to buffer against the negative developmental outcomes associated with living in circumstances of multiple adversity (Rutter, 1987). A child may have factors within himself or herself which act in a protective manner but this appears to be moderated or mediated by the circumstances of their environment.

2.2.2 Definitions of resilience

A resilient individual is not invulnerable to stress, rather he or she experiences stress but has an ability to recover relatively quickly from negative events and return to normal functioning (Garmezy, 1991; Luthar, 2006; Olsson, Bond, Burns, Vella-Broderick, & Sawyer, 2003). Some researchers argue that individuals can only learn good adaptation skills through finding ways of coping with stress. Rutter (1985) explains that resilient individuals do not avoid risk, but rather they successfully engage with it and adapt their thinking and behaviour to cope with adverse situations. Although they are closely linked terms, resilience differs from coping as resilience demands successful engagement with adversity, however, coping with a situation can mean that an individual carries on functioning in a negative situation by avoiding the problem (Gruen, Folkman, & Lazarus, 1988). Coping also provides a general description of how people deal with challenging situations, whereas resilience implies a history of exposure to adversity and learning through experience (Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004).

Early in the research, resilience was defined simply as doing well despite facing adversity (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000). A resilient process needed to include the presence of a threat to the person and a positive response (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). In order to successfully measure resilience, positive adaptation needed to be clearly defined. Early researchers focused on the concept of competence (Garmezy, 1974; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). Masten defines competence broadly as “reasonable success with major developmental tasks expected for a person of a given age and gender in the context of his or her culture, society and time” (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998, p. 206). Later researchers expanded on the concept of competence as being indicative of resilience. For example, Bonano (2004) defined resilience as being when an individual who has experienced a trauma has “the ability to maintain relatively stable, healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning... as well as the capacity for generative experiences and positive emotions” (Bonano, 2004, p. 20-21).

The next step of the conceptualisation of resilience began to view the construct as involving protective *processes*, rather than static factors. One of the world’s leading resilience researchers, Ann Masten, currently defines resilience as “the processes of, capacity for, or pathways and patterns of positive adaptation during or following significant threats or disturbances” (Masten, 2011, p. 494). An example of a protective process is a school environment with high achievement expectations which works well in combination with parental encouragement (Masten & Obradovic, 2006). Researchers are starting to explore how these protective resources work together to encourage resilient outcomes (Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Ungar, 2008).

There is controversy in resilience research regarding what constitutes resilient behaviour and how best to measure resilience in an individual’s life (Karapetian & Grados, 2005).

Researchers have suggested that for an individual to be called resilient, he or she would have to demonstrate positive behaviour in a number of settings in his or her life and across time (Cicchetti & Rogosch, 1997). However, some resilience studies have described participants who are successfully adaptive in one area, for example in his or her social relationships, but not in another area, for example he or she has high anxiety symptoms (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ward et al., 2007).

Furthermore, time appears to affect resilience, as protective factors seem to work differently at different developmental stages and ages of a child’s life (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998;

Rutter, 1987). For example, babies need constant care from their parents but as they get older, children need other protective factors such as relationships with peers and other adults and to achieve successfully in school (Masten, 2007). Resilience appears to involve multiple skills and influences at various stages to help individuals adapt successfully.

One of the current areas of focus in resilience research is on how resilient outcomes are influenced by the chemical and structural condition of the brain (Charney, 2004). Current neurological research has found that traumatic early environments lead to a reduction in brain size and neural networks, whereas positive early environments allow a strong neural network to develop and the brain to increase in size (Curtis & Nelson, 2003). Physical changes in the brain may have effects on an individual's future vulnerability for mental illness (Cicchetti & Curtis, 2006; Luthar & Brown, 2007).

Therefore resilience is a complex interaction of many factors. There are no direct causal pathways between risk or protective factors and certain outcomes, but rather there is a dynamic process of reciprocal interaction which results in individual outcomes (Lynch, 2003; Masten, 2007; O'Donnell et al., 2002). The focus of resilience research is on the interaction of protective factors which support positive adaptation in an environment of multiple adversities (Masten, 2007; Rutter, 1993; Ungar et al., 2007).

2.2.3 Relationships between risk and resilience factors

Research has shown that the more protective factors an individual has in their lives, the higher the chance of their demonstrating resilient outcomes (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000). However, little is known regarding the interactions of specific combinations of protective factors to produce outcomes. Some factors can influence other protective situations to occur in an individual's life. For example, being involved in a sport might lead to a supportive relationship with a coach and relationships with pro-social peers. This is referred to as the "cascade" effect (Luthar, Sawyer, & Brown, 2006, p. 111). Additionally, some factors have been identified as both protective and as putting youth at risk. High intelligence appears to protect youth from delinquency (Condly, 2006) but in some studies highly intelligent youth have more internalising problems than less intelligent youth (Condly, 2006; Vanderbilt-Adriaanse & Shaw, 2008). Another example is anxiety which, when severe, is classified as an internalising disorder, but some studies have found that anxiety is protective against

delinquent behaviour for adolescents living in communities faced with chronic violence (Centers & Weist, 1998). More research is needed to explore under what conditions a factor can be protective or pose a risk to an individual.

Luthar and Cicchetti (2000) identified four patterns of relationship among risk and protective factors and the emotional and behavioural outcomes that they influence. The first pattern they call “Protective,” where there is a direct effect of the protective factor on the adjustment of the individual. The second pattern is called “Protective-Stabilizing” and describes when there are high levels of protective factors in an individual’s life and their level of negative psychological symptoms remain low and their adjustment remains stable despite increasing risk. When the protective factors are at a low level, the adjustment difficulties increase. The third pattern is called “Protective-enhancing” where there are high levels of the protective factors and individuals’ adjustment difficulties decrease with an increase in the risk situation. However, when the protective factor level is low, the individual’s adjustment difficulties will increase with increased risk. The fourth pattern of relationship is known as the “Protective-reactive” pattern where the protective factors benefit the individual but not as significantly when the risk is high.

Resilience researchers often use Bronfenbrenner’s (1977; 1979) ecological systems theory as a framework to study the influences on resilience. This theory is particularly useful in accounting for the differences in resilient responses of youth from socio-economically disadvantaged communities. Ecological systems theory sees the individual as the centre of a series of systems that cover all the internal and external influences in a person’s life.

According to this theory, human development occurs through interactions between individuals and the people and environments around them. The microsystem includes the individual’s family, friends and school and is of greatest influence on the individual.

Bronfenbrenner proposes that these factors interact with the individual’s cognitive and emotional structure to influence how they act, think and feel and consequently how they develop (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In the tiers beyond the microsystem, Bronfenbrenner (1979) adds in all the influences from the greater society on an individual, including the family, community, laws and culture which all affect individuals. Bronfenbrenner’s model is an excellent broad overview of the influences on an individual’s resilience, however, more detailed models are needed to explain how these tiers of influence interact to support resilience.

Bandura's (1977; 1997) social cognitive and self-efficacy theory builds on Bronfenbrenner's ideas that young people's beliefs and ways of thinking are developed through interaction with social and environmental factors, specifically by modelling others' behaviour (Bandura, 1977). An example of how one's environment affects one's thinking and behaviour is that of young people modelling the behaviours of others and performing these behaviours when they expect to be rewarded by doing them. Bandura (1997) explains that children are more likely to develop certain behaviours when someone reinforces them and this person is usually the one who provides them with the most attention and positive reinforcement. These children are more likely to imitate behaviour that elicits successful outcomes with others (Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004). These theories could explain why some children in disadvantaged situations develop negative behaviours. If there are too few adults to model achievement and to positively reinforce pro-social behaviour, then this environment may not be supportive of resilient outcomes. Therefore a child is influenced by all the systems in his or her life, from their personality, to their family environment, to their community and their dominant culture.

2.2.4 Contextual and cultural aspects of resilience

The majority of resilience studies have been, up until recently, conducted with samples from high-income societies (Ungar, 2008). Recently, researchers have examined the common understandings of positive adaptation and are starting to criticise the dominance of 'western' values which influence the criteria included in the concept (Masten & Wright, 2010; Ungar, 2008, 2013; Ungar et al., 2007). They argue that there has not been sufficient acknowledgment of the influence of community and cultural factors on the particular understandings of resilient behaviour of different cultural groups (Ungar, 2013). Therefore, the most current wave of research interest has turned toward the influence of an individual's culture on their resilience. Ungar (2013) argues that resilience cannot be separated from the cultural context in which the resilient individual is embedded. An individual's cultural context and neighbourhood environment hold particular values, beliefs and everyday practices that can assist or impede their coping with adversity (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Rutter, 1987; Masten, 2001; Ungar, 2008). The transactions which encourage resilience might be similar across cultures, but the resources would probably not be exactly the same and would reflect cultural and contextual influences (Ungar, 2011; Wright & Masten, 2006). Different contexts and cultures may have an effect on which protective factors are the most

supportive, and a factor that protects in one environment may not be as effective in another (Howard, Dryden, & Johnson, 1999).

The International Resilience Project (IRP) was founded to address this gap in the research. This large study, using a mixed methods approach, investigated resilience with over 1500 young people on five continents (Ungar, Lee, Callaghan, & Boothroyd, 2005; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005). Results from this study suggest a wide variety of different coping methods exist among youth in different cultures (Ungar, 2006; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005). For example, Chapman and Mullis (2000) studied 361 high school students and found significant differences in the coping strategies used by African American and Caucasian students. In contrast to the Caucasian students, who looked to their parents for support, the African American students were more likely to look to peers, spiritual supports and self-reliance in finding support. Studies like these illuminate the importance of taking into account all the possible influences on the resilient outcomes of young people. To this end, Ungar (2008), offers a new definition of resilience which includes the acknowledgement of cultural and contextual influences:

“In the context of exposure to significant adversity, whether psychological, environmental, or both, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual’s family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways” (Ungar, 2008, p. 255).

Ungar (2008) explains that resilience is a process of the individual seeking out and negotiating for resources that will assist them in achieving healthy outcomes. Therefore current research emphasises the importance of studying local community constructions of resilience in a variety of contexts to gain better understandings of how different cultures affect the resilience of their people (Ungar, et al., 2007). In his most current commentary on the state of resilience research, Ungar (2013) concludes that “nurture trumps nature;” resilient outcomes have more to do with the quality of the environment and its capacity to offer opportunities for personal development, than purely the influence of individual characteristics (Ungar, 2013, p. 262). As one of the most important foci of this study is the community context of Hanover Park and it’s the environmental and sociocultural influences on the participants’

positive adjustments to adversity, the study will take Ungar's Social Ecology of Resilience Theory as the guiding theoretical framework.

In light of the current emphasis on including all the layers of influence on resilience, Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework (1977), which provides a structure to examine the layers of influential factors in an individual's life (Eriksson, Cater, Andershed, A & Andershed, H., 2010) has been chosen as an appropriate guiding framework to review the current literature on the protective factors supporting resilient outcomes in children and adolescents exposed to community violence. The review will consider both international and South African findings.

2.3 Individual Protective Factors against the Negative Outcomes Associated with Exposure to Violence

Much research has identified individual characteristics which protect young people from the negative effects of living in contexts of multiple adversity. One of the most commonly reported characteristics of resilient individuals is a positive, flexible, social temperament. Children who are optimistic and likely to elicit positive responses from others, are better able to form close, caring relationships from a young age. These children give caregivers, peers and teachers less negative feedback and anxiety and therefore others find them likeable and are better disposed to give them warmth and attention, which, in turn, further increases their self-esteem and optimism (Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Kitano, & Lewis, 2005; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Masten & Powell, 2003; Werner, 1984). Children who are good at making positive relationships with others are described as having a high level of social competence. Social competency means being able to apply a variety of social behaviours in order to form and maintain positive relationships with family members as well as other community members (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2002). Socially competent children like being in the company of others, they are good-natured, adjustable, empathetic, responsible, independent and socially- skilled (Joseph, 1994; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Masten & Powell, 2003; Werner, 1984). Additionally, resilient children have been found to have a generally positive outlook on life and to have hope for the future (Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004; Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Kumpfer, 1999; Masten, 2001; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Masten & Wright, 2010; Murray, 2010). Research has shown that children with social competence are significantly less likely to present with either

internalising or externalising problems (Drugli, Larsson, Clifford, & Forsum, 2007; Schultz, Tharp-Taylor, Haviland, & Jaycox, 2009; Kimber, Sandell, & Bremberg, 2008). Ogden and colleagues (2007) also found that interventions focussing on improving social competence were effective in decreasing internalising behaviour problems.

Karapetian and Grados (2005), Luthar, (2006) and Masten and Wright (2010) have found that children with a strong sense of humour, even in difficult circumstances, are significantly more resilient than children with less of a sense of humour. Darla (1999) comments that a sense of humour may be protective as it may help to relieve the stress associated with living in unfavourable conditions. A sense of humour in difficult circumstances is described as a mature defence mechanism, which provides the distance from the problem needed to look objectively for new solutions (Cohen, 1990). A sense of humour has been found to provide energy and help to lift feelings of sadness in conditions of multiple adversity (Cohen, 1990; Townsend, 1994; Yura-Petro, 1991).

High or average intelligence has been found to be very protective for children exposed to multiple traumas (Kapland, 2005; Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Masten, 2001; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Masten & Wright, 2010). Intelligent children have the ability to plan and problem-solve effectively, implying the ability to adapt well under difficult conditions (Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Masten, 2001; Masten & Wright, 2010; Masten & Powell, 2003). An intelligent child also has the ability to think critically, to visualise the context of a problem and to develop new insights into it. This way of thinking assists children in solving problems more effectively and increases the probability of a beneficial solution being chosen (Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Wolin & Wolin, 1996). This proactive approach to problem-solving requires a child to think independently, and to approach traumatic experiences in a constructive manner, allowing the child to plan how to reduce their sadness and anxiety resulting from the experience (Krovetz, 1999). Linked to intelligence and cognitive competence, resilient children also appear to have “goals, perseverance, determination, and the ability to look back on one’s life to identify past experiences of overcoming adversity” which have been found to be protective when living in situations of chronic violence (Smokowski, Reynolds, & Bezruczko, 1999, p. 444).

Studies have found that intelligent children have the capacity to exert greater control over their impulses, thereby delaying immediate gratification of desires, and to rather behave in a manner that benefits their future goals (Hauser, Vieyra, Jacob & Wertlieb, 1985). This

emotional control has been associated with resilient outcomes. Resilient children have also been found to be better able to control their own emotions and behaviour, to adapt to situations and to have a high frustration tolerance (Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Masten, 2001; Masten & Obradovic, 2006).

A characteristic also linked to intelligence is the ability to critically observe the choices of others in the community, including those of family and non-family members, and to reflect on the consequences of these choices. This ability, first explained in the seminal study by Werner and Smith (1982) which referred to the value of role models, both positive and negative, and emphasised by Kumpfer (1999) in her later study, allows a young person to gain information regarding what may be harmful and what may be beneficial courses of action in life and motivates them to learn to avoid making the same harmful choices as others around them.

When a child believes that they are competent and capable of doing well at something, this increases their self-esteem and motivates them to put effort into this area. In their study on resilient adolescents, Smokowski et al. (1999) found that the participants identified as resilient had had an experience where they were able to master something, and could explain how they had learned from other peoples' behaviour, which then helped with their new task. Many studies have found that cognitive competence and competence in school (Bernard, 2004; Gonida, 2006; Masten et al., 2001; Shonk & Cichetti, 2001), as well as competence in other areas like sports (Papaioannou, 2006), play an important role in resilience. Masten et al. (1990) notes that resilient children feel that they have a sense of purpose, a sense of usefulness to their homes and communities. These children know that they are competent to do some tasks and thereby gain a sense of purpose (Werner, 1984).

Studies have shown that an internal locus of control may be protective against the negative effects of living in an area of multiple adversity (Bolger & Patterson, 2003; Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004; Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Masten & Wright, 2010; Werner, 2006). Internal locus of control can be explained as a belief in one's control over the environment and in one's self-efficacy, a belief in one's ability to take the initiative and to affect change (Kim, Sandler, & Tein, 1997). In contrast, external locus of control beliefs are based on the idea that events are caused by other people's actions or the cause is unknown to the individual, which often results in feelings of powerlessness and helplessness, which have in turn been linked to negative mental health symptoms amongst children and

adolescents (Kim et al., 1997). Having the belief that control of one's life is located inside one could be seen to guard against feelings of helplessness and empower the individual to take action to prevent themselves or others from repeated exposure to stressors.

Children who develop a belief that they can exert some control over what happens to them also often develop the ability to make meaning out of their lives, to clearly see their role in their environment (Antonovsky, 1979). This ability to make sense of their environment and find meaning in their situations gives children strength to cope with challenging situations in their futures (Joseph, 1994). Children with this ability have a more mature self-understanding, and they are able to reflect on their experiences and integrate these into their self-concept. The belief in their ability to control what happens to them is empowering for children, and this leads to self-confidence and a positive self-concept which is protective against the negative effects of subsequent adversity (Brooks, 1994; Darla, 1999).

Another protective factor linked to belief appears to be religious orientation. Studies have shown that having a strong religious orientation may act as a buffer against the negative effects of violence exposure in the lives of high-risk adolescents and have found that it is associated with a decrease in conduct problems and delinquency (Jones, 2007; Kumpfer, 1999; Masten & Garmezy, 1985; Pearce, Jones, Schwab-Stone & Ruchkin, 2003; Theron & Dunn, 2010; Werner, 2006). Researchers suggest that religion may protect adolescents by promoting beliefs which young people internalise and make part of their identity. Often young people experience guilt or shame at the idea of breaking the moral codes set out by their religion and this exerts a protective influence on their behaviour (Pearce et al., 2003). Religious youth tend to have family and friends who are also religious and they reinforce prosocial norms for young people (Jones, 2007; Pearce et al., 2003). In their study of African American single mothers, Brody and Flor (1998) found that women who described themselves as strongly religious often reported that they practiced a firm control and monitoring of their children, but were also very warm and affectionate towards their children. In two other studies looking at resilience in African American families, Hill (1993) and Bagley and Carroll (1998) found that resilience against negative psychosocial and behavioural outcomes was strongly connected to a close relationship with the church, with Hill (1993) finding that families with a strong religious orientation had higher social and economic achievement than families with less religious orientation.

2.4 South African Findings on Individual Protective Factors

In the last decade, South African research has studied resilience in a variety of child populations, including amongst school children (Govender & Killian, 2001; Mampane & Bouwer, 2006; Pillay, & Nesengani, 2006; Theron, 2007), university students (Dails-Brailsford, 2005; Phasha, 2010), children recovering from sexual abuse (Phasha, 2010; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005), children with learning difficulties; children's resilience within the HIV/AIDS context (Ebersöhn, 2007; Ebersöhn & Maree, 2006); and resilience in children living on the street (Malindi & Theron, 2010). Samples have ranged from very small samples of a few case studies (Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005) to very large studies examining resilient outcomes in samples of hundreds of participants (Ebersöhn, 2007; Ebersöhn & Maree, 2006; Pienaar, Beukes & Esterhuyse, 2006; Theron, 2007). Resilience has been measured in quantitative studies by measuring exposure to negative life events and the presence of clinical symptoms (Govender & Killian, 2001), as well as using qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews (Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008; Phasha, 2010; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005).

Three local studies have defined resilient outcomes in different ways. For her study, Dass-Brailsford (2005) defined resilience as “the ability to embrace the challenges of life and to retain openness to the world in the face of adversity (Dass-Brailsford, 2005, p. 575). In a study focusing on the role of the school subject Life Orientation as promotive of positive outcomes for children, Theron (2007) understood resilient children to demonstrate academic achievement, as well as positive behaviour, good social relations with peers, no mental health pathologies and to be involved in developmentally suitable activities. In a later study, Phasha (2010) examined young women displaying resilience from sexual abuse and measured their resilience by their regular school attendance, pro-social behaviour and high career aspirations. Malindi and Theron's (2010) study of resilience in street youth utilized Ungar's (2006) definition of resilience (see quote on pg 18). Therefore definitions of resilience in South African research have varied and changed over time to incorporate greater understanding of the many factors at work in producing positive outcomes for children in adverse contexts. The findings of South African research have produced associations between resilient outcomes in children and adolescents and a number of individual characteristics and qualities and these results have generally replicated international research findings.

Self-worth and social skills

South African research has found clear associations between children who have a sense of self-worth and positive outcomes (Barbarin, Richter & DeWet, 2001; Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ebersöhn, 2008; Ebersöhn & Maree, 2006; Germann, 2005; Theron, 2004; Theron & Malindi, 2012). Children who exhibit good social skills, act in a socially-acceptable manner, display a desire for love, and have empathy with others are also more likely to recover well from adversity (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ebersöhn, 2008; Ebersöhn & Maree, 2006; Germann, 2005; Theron, 2004). For example, a study of resilience among sexually-molested girls found that the girls who demonstrated psychological resilience, defined as the absence of emotional and behavioural disorders commonly associated with the effects of child sexual abuse, were also self-confident, socially-skilled and had emotionally stable personalities (Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005). A sense of humour has also been found to be protective for South African youth as it encourages positive social relationships and facilitates stress relief (Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008; Malindi & Theron, 2010). Theron (2007) found that participants who exhibited positive behaviours explained that by treating other people with respect they encouraged others to treat them with respect, which often included others helping the participants with support, care, and understanding, which in turn helped them to cope with adversity.

Self-regulation skills

The ability to regulate their behaviour towards others has been found to be associated with positive outcomes for adolescents in South African studies (Ebersöhn & Maree, 2006; Malindi & Theron, 2010). In their study, Van Rensburg and Barnard (2005) found that children who were resilient after experiencing sexual abuse were also realistic and mature in their attitudes and self-disciplined in their behaviour. Theron and Malindi (2010) studied the resilience of street children and found that the youth who were able to make the healthiest choices adopted an attitude of stoicism, regulated their attitudes, and consciously put aside their emotional pain in order to focus on survival.

Adaptability

Barbarin, Richter & De Wet (2001) found that personal adaptability, flexibility and frustration tolerance moderated the psychological effects of community violence exposure on

five year-old township children. These findings have also been reflected in other local studies (Ebersöhn, 2007; Ebersöhn & Maree, 2006; Theron et al., 2012).

Internal locus of control and agency

Shields, Nadasen and Pierce (2008) observe that as children have little or no control over violence in their communities, this could result in them having a high unknown or external locus of control belief. However, studies have shown that a large number of children living in dangerous communities in South Africa do demonstrate internal locus of control beliefs which appear to be protective against the negative effects of exposure to high levels of community violence (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ebersöhn, 2007; Govender & Killian, 2001; Mampane, & Bouwer, 2006; Pienaar, Beukes, & Esterhuyse, 2006; Theron, 2004; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005). These children exhibit strong initiative and are able to take action to deal with the challenges they face (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Malindi & Theron, 2010; Mampane, & Bouwer, 2006; Van Rensburg, & Barnard, 2005).

Bray and colleagues (2010) studied adolescents living in the low socioeconomic areas of Ocean View and Masipumelele in the Western Cape. The study found that participants in the black African neighbourhood of Masipumelele demonstrated some degree of control over, or self-determination in, their lives by making conscious choices based on moral rules and reported this ability as being important to their well-being. Bray (2010) comments that this sense of self-determination is particularly important in an environment of few material resources and may be influenced by the powerful discourse among the young regarding education leading to personal success. In contrast, the researchers found that the young people in the coloured community of Ocean View believed that very few young people have influence over their lives, and they attributed the problem to the perception that young people in these areas do not take responsibility for themselves and blame others for their problems. Making a decision to strive for a certain goal or to live by certain codes is another important means by which young people consider that they can achieve greater control over their lives and the world around them (Bray et al., 2010).

Linked to the desire to exercise agency in their lives, is the capacity to critically observe the choices and experiences of other members of the community and to reflect on these choices and their consequences and use this information to consciously decide what influences will direct their choices. In a recently published South African study, Theron and Theron (2013)

emphasis the protective power of observation and learning from the examples of others, being open to receiving guidance from others on how to make protective choices. In this study, hearing accounts of others' success in overcoming challenging experiences gave the participants motivation to demonstrate their own resilience to hardship and gave the participants hope for a more positive future for themselves.

Assertiveness

A quality which may be related to a belief in one's agency is assertiveness. Resilient children appear to also be assertive, to be able to stand up for themselves and believe that they are able to influence the ways in which they are treated. Several local studies have found assertiveness to be associated with displaying positive behaviours in adverse circumstance (Malindi & Theron, 2010; Mampane & Bouwer, 2006; Theron, 2004)

Academic success

In South African studies, children who evidence positive outcomes in the face of difficult circumstances have been found to both value and achieve academic success (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ebersöhn, & Maree, 2006; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008). In their study on children from families affected by the stress of HIV & AIDS, Ebersöhn and Maree (2006) found that being able to continue with their education and doing well in school was a source of pride and strength for participants. These children were motivated to succeed at school and determined to persevere to achieve their goals.

Problem-solving

South African studies have also found that resilient children demonstrate good problem-solving skills (Ebersöhn, 2008; Ebersöhn, 2007; Govender & Killian, 2001; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; Pillay, & Nesengani, 2006; Theron & Malindi, 2010) as well as goal-setting abilities (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008; Theron, 2004, 2007), which were found to be protective against the negative effects of exposure to violence and other stressors. Mampane and Bouwer (2006) found that the resilient children in their study demonstrated responsibility, independence, assertiveness, self-efficacy and resourcefulness. They summarised their findings as follows: "Most participants knew what they needed and how to acquire it and viewed their problems as challenges that they had to

overcome” (Mampane & Bouwer, 2006, p. 452). These authors found that their less resilient participants “were not assertive in their environment, they gave up easily, displayed an external locus of control, appeared to lack flexibility and planning in their problem solving, expressed dependence on others for solutions, were unable to find alternative solutions and experienced little success in their lives” (Mampane & Bouwer, 2006, p. 453). From these studies, it appears that supporting children living in dangerous communities to foster a belief in themselves as capable of initiating change is an important protective factor against the effects of exposure to chronic violence and other stressors

Responsibility

In their study of resilient children living in families affected by HIV/AIDS, Ebersöhn and Maree (2006) found that the young resilient children often had added responsibilities such as taking care of sick parents, cooking and cleaning in the house and looking after siblings. The participants reported that, far from adding to the stress in their lives, they found meaning and self-worth in being able to perform the responsibilities and help the family survive. The protective effect of responsibility has also been found in other local studies (Mampane & Bouwer, 2006; Theron, 2004).

Religiosity

South African research has also identified a link between involvement in religion and positive mental health and behavioural outcomes in children exposed to chronic community violence (Barbarin, Richter & DeWet, 2007; Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Pienaar, Beukes, & Esterhuyse, 2006; Smukler, 1990). In their study on factors supporting resilience in the lives of adolescents, Kruger and Prinsloo (2008) found that religiousness was associated with positive outcomes. However this finding does not prove a causal relationship between religiosity and resilience as it may be the case that resilient children are more attracted to religious organisations. More longitudinal research needs to be done on this issue to gain further understanding of this relationship. In her study, Germann (2005) found that being part of a religious community gave her young participants the opportunity to establish further supportive relationships. Malindi and Theron (2010) found that religious belief gave their participants emotional strength, and church values guided their behaviour and gave them moral support.

Future orientation

South African studies have found that children exposed to community violence who display no psychological or behavioural problems are characterized as hopeful and optimistic about their situations and futures (Ebersöhn, 2008; Ebersöhn & Maree, 2006; Phasha, 2010; Theron, 2004). Theron, Theron and Malindi (2012) call the resilient Basotho youth who have a positive future orientation ‘dreamers:’ they were future orientated, had “day dreams of how their life would become... dreams meant hope for the future, and hope meant success” (Theron et al., 2012, p. 74). Theron and colleagues’ (2012) findings indicate an emergent theme which had not before been mentioned in resilience literature. The researchers called this theme “acceptance” and this refers to young people’s acceptance of their situations, feeling that it is pointless to struggle against their circumstances rather they would accept them for the present but do things to better their future (Theron et al., 2012, p. 74). Theron (2007) found that parents, particularly mothers and grandmothers, who encouraged their children to work towards a better future for themselves were mentioned as being a significant source of support for the children.

In summary, South African research indicates that the individual characteristics and interpersonal ingredients which best support a positive outcome for a child faced with adversity are: self-confidence and the belief in one’s ability to influence the environment to protect oneself, social skills, good problem-solving abilities, hope for a positive future and perhaps belief in a higher power. These characteristics then interact with external factors present in a child’s environment which may or may not continue with supporting them towards a beneficial outcome. The following section will review external factors found to be protective for children.

2.5 Environmental Protective Factors Against the Negative Outcomes Associated with Exposure to Violence

2.5.1 Social support

One of the most important factors which protects against the negative effects of trauma is social support, meaning support and care from family and friends. Social support can be divided into two main types. Emotional support is where one’s family and friends listen with

care to an individual's expression of their emotions, and express affection for that person (Ceballo & McLoyd, 2002). Instrumental support includes helping a person with the material resources, information and services that they need (Ceballo & McLoyd, 2002). What researchers have found to be of most importance is the amount and quality of support that a person perceives that they receive. Much research has explored the moderating role of perceived social support on the relationship between exposure to violence and negative psychological effects, (Benhorin & McMahon, 2008; Ceballo & McLoyd, 2002; Krenichyn, Saegert & Evans, 2001; O'Donnell, Schwab-Stone, & Mueeed, 2002).

There are two models of social support effects in the literature, the Main Effect model and the Stress-Buffering model (Cohen & Wills, 1985). The Main Effect model theorises that social support benefits all individuals regardless of the levels of stress they experience. The Stress-Buffering model proposes that social support has a more beneficial impact on individual's exposed to higher levels of trauma (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Most studies on the effects of stressful situations on adolescents have found support for the Stress-Buffering model, however some studies have found support for the "protective-reactive" role of social support (Luthar et al., 2000) where social support protects adolescents in situations of low stress but does not have much effect in situations of high stress (Elliot et al., 2006). Similarly, Rosario and colleagues (2008) found that social support from guardians and peers only plays a protective role against symptoms of depression and anxiety in situations characterised by low levels of stress.

PTSD has been the outcome that has received the most attention from researchers studying the effects of social support on individuals exposed to traumatic experiences (Guay, Billette, & Marchand, 2006). In a meta-analysis of 77 studies examining the risk factors related to PTSD, the results showed that lack of social support was the strongest influence in the development of PTSD among adolescents exposed to community violence (Trickey, Siddaway, Meiser-Stedman, Serpell, & Field, 2012). Hammack, Richards, Luo, Edlynn and Roy (2004) studied African American adolescents living in inner-city Chicago areas and found that their social relationships were crucial aspects of their resilience against violence exposure in their lives. Equally, lower levels of perceived support were associated with more psychological distress and aggression among youths in violent communities (Benhorin & MacMahon, 2008; Krenichyn et al., 2001).

The importance of social support was emphasised in the findings of a large, longitudinal study called ‘The Project Competence.’ In the study a group of high risk and a group of low risk urban school children were examined, in a sample totalling 205 children, at ages 7, 10 and 20 years, and compared with regard to the variation in their resilience (Masten & Powell, 2003; Masten et al., 2004, 2005). In this study, resilience was defined in terms of achievement of developmental tasks such as academic achievement, positive social skills and pro-social behaviour (Masten et al., 1999). The study found that maladaptive behaviour was associated with high adversity and low social support; in situations of low adversity, children exhibiting maladaptive behaviour were uncommon. Masten and colleagues (2004) observed that children with maladaptive behaviour could change towards a resilient trajectory in adolescence and these adolescents often displayed characteristics such as goal-directed behaviour and future orientation, and had the support of adults in their lives. Parental support is one of the most important factors for children growing up in contexts of multiple adversity. The following section explores the role of parental and family factors in enhancing or compromising children’s resilience.

2.5.2 Parental support

Living in communities of high trauma and violence exposure has an adverse effect on parents, including feelings of helplessness, anxiety and depression (Krenichyn et al., 2001), which in turn reduces their ability to protect their children. If a parent is able to support and emotionally contain a child who has been traumatised, this will reduce the chances of that child developing negative mental health consequences, however if caretakers are traumatised themselves, the likelihood of the child being traumatised increases (Ceballo & McLoyd, 2002). If a parent is very distressed they will not be able to provide a secure and predictable environment for their child to recover in, as well as not being able to provide emotional containment for the child’s fear and anxiety (Ceballo & McLoyd, 2002). A United States study researching the posttraumatic stress symptoms of adolescents following the September 11th attacks found that the adolescents’ symptoms were significantly influenced by their parents’ distress, amongst other factors (Gil-Rivas, Chen Silver, Holman, McIntosh, & Poulin, 2007).

The quality of the relationship between an infant and its primary care-giver has long-reaching implications for the infant’s development and well-being (Bowlby, 1988). Children raised in

environments where their parents are facing multiple obstacles may struggle with forming stable attachment bonds to their care-givers. Stress associated with a low family income can lead to high levels of conflict within the family which, in turn, has been found to increase the risk of negative consequences for children exposed to community violence (Overstreet & Braun, 2000). Parents or guardians may be unable to provide the optimal nurturing environment that children need to develop trust in others. According to attachment theory, children create their ideas of the outside world based on these early relationships (Bowlby, 1988; Bretherton, 1990). Children who have had insecurely attached early relationships often have lower self-esteem, have problems with social competence, including difficulties forming friendships, are less popular with their peers and exhibit more aggression than children who have had secure early attachments (Lynch & Cicchetti, 1998; Park & Waters, 1989). As close, supportive relationships have been shown to be protective against the negative effects of exposure to chronic violence, those children who are less able to form strong bonds with others are more at risk of developing negative mental health and behavioural symptoms (Benhorin & McMahon, 2008; Ceballo & McLoyd, 2002; Krenichyn et al., 2001).

Parents living in dangerous communities are often extremely anxious about the safety of their children and as a result can be overly strict and punitive in their parenting, often using violent discipline methods to enforce obedience (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). Children raised with punitive parenting often exhibit higher aggressive behaviours and lower rates of social competence than those raised in more nurturing environments (Krenichyn et al., 2001). Often this style of parenting has the effect of distancing the children from the family and encouraging them to spend more time away from home, where they might be exposed to further community violence.

However, within communities experiencing high levels of violence, there are many families that provide stable and nurturing environments for their children. If a child's family remains a safe space within the context of an unsafe community, the child's sense of personal safety and trust may be kept intact, which will protect them against the negative impact of exposure to community violence (McCabe et al., 2005). Studies have shown that the perception of strong family support reduces the chances of an individual developing PTSD symptoms when exposed to high levels of community violence (Howard, Budge, & McKay, 2010; Ozer, 2005). These supportive families have a capacity of self-preservation known as "Family Hardiness" (Kobasa, 1979). Slone, Shoshani and Paltieli (2009), explored this concept and

explain the characteristics of such families as “mutual commitment, confidence in the family, active coping abilities and sense of control against external threat” (Slone et al., 2009, p.340). Slone and colleagues observe that these parents offer their children a sense of security, a place to speak about their emotions within an atmosphere of acceptance, and practical advice to assist decision-making. The greatest resilience has been found in children who have at least one good relationship with a parent or other adult who provides warmth and sets boundaries for the child (Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004; Howard, Dryden, & Johnson, 1999; Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Bekker, 2000; Masten, 2001; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Masten & Wright, 2010; Masten & Powell, 2003).

Supportive parents provide physical support as well as love, nurturance and a sense of safety (Masten, 2001) and they are interested and involved with the child’s education and school (Masten, 2007; Masten & Wright, 2010). This type of nurturing relationship with a parent may increase the child’s self-confidence so that he or she is able to recognise and seek out other nurturing relationships with teachers or peers. A family climate that is characterised by warm family relationships and is relatively free from domestic fighting is also protective against negative mental health and behavioural consequences for the children (Masten, 2001; Masten & Wright, 2010). Resilience is also promoted by a type of parenting that is authoritative, but not authoritarian, has good, open communication, and where the parent has firm control over the child’s life, monitoring the children’s activities outside the home (Howard, Dryden, & Johnson, 1999; Karapetian & Grados, 2005). These rules extend to other aspects of family life, creating set family routines so that life feels safe and predictable to the child (Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Masten, 2001; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Masten & Powell, 2003). Children whose parents monitor where they spend their time or who they associate with, report that their children have fewer delinquent friends and fewer behavioural problems and, as a result, are less exposed to community violence (Salzinger et al., 2007).

Kliewer, Lepore, Oskin and Johnson (1998) further found that adolescents were less distressed from their exposure to traumatic events when their parents were available to them and encouraged them to talk about what they are feeling. A study in the United States found that having supportive parents was a strong predictor of resilience in children, being associated with more self-reliance, having higher future expectations, and lower rates of substance abuse, depression, anxiety and school misconduct (O’Donnell et al., 2002). However, studies have found that as children grow older, parental support becomes less effective, and support from peers and schools becomes more important to the adolescent. For

example, in their longitudinal study, O'Donnell et al. (2002) found that parent support reduced substance abuse, depression and anti-social behaviour at school and encouraged independence in their children, but this effect became less pronounced as the children became older, when school support was more influential.

In South Africa many communities struggle with the multiple challenges of poverty, violence, unemployment and substance abuse and many children come from single-parent homes, with absentee fathers being a very common occurrence (Barbarin et al., 2000; Dass-Brailsford, 2005). In these situations, families' abilities to provide adequate support and protection for their children are heavily taxed. When family support does exist, it has been shown to be protective for children (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005). Families which provide love, care and a sense of stability, encourage positive self-worth in their children, which strengthens resilient outcomes (Cluver & Gardner, 2006; Theron & Malindi, 2012). Further, South African research reports that children who perceive that they are supported by their families exhibit lower rates of traumatic stress symptoms (Barbarin et al., 2001; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008; Van der Merwe, 2001). Cluver, Fincham and Seedat (2009), found that perceived family support assisted resilient outcomes in AIDS orphans by significantly reducing their development of PTSD symptoms. Dass-Brailsford (2005) found that supportive parents encouraged black youth towards completing their tertiary education. Other studies have found that parental support enables youth to commit to going to school and to develop coping skills to help with daily living (Theron, 2007). A supportive family environment provides members with love, a feeling of being valued, a sense of belonging, and clear and consistent family rules (Theron, 2007; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005). Parents encourage resilience when they themselves have coped well with trauma (Smukler, 1990) and when their children report that they had positive parental qualities they could emulate (Dass-Brailsford, 2005).

However, some local studies have found that parental support had limited buffering effects for children against the negative effects of exposure to violence. For example, Govender and Killian (2001) studied a sample of grade nine learners and found that the family was not a significant source of support for these adolescents living in a violent environment. In their study of the effects of community violence exposure among township children, Shields, Nadasen and Pierce (2008) found that family support was only able to provide limited protection for children. Similarly, Ward and colleagues (2007) did not find that parent support reduced symptoms of anxiety, depression and conduct problems among adolescents

exposed to community violence, and the researchers comment that this may be the result of the participants reporting that they were most likely to be victimised in their own homes, rather than in the community. These researchers support international findings in their conclusion that family conflict exacerbates the relationship between community violence exposure and poor mental health and behaviour problems, but a close, supportive family environment may be protective (Ward et al., 2007). Supporting the findings which emphasise the significant risk that exposure to chronic community violence poses for children, are the results from the study by Fincham and colleagues (2009). This study with a sample of Cape Town high school learners found that high levels of resilience in learners who had experienced childhood abuse reduced the risk of developing symptoms of PTSD, but it did not have a significant influence on the stress and PTSD symptoms that the adolescents developed as a result of exposure to community violence.

Similar to international findings, South African studies have also found evidence to support the effect of developmental stages on parental support efficacy, with younger children relying more on parental support than older adolescents. In a study of a sample of five-year-old children, the effects of community violence exposure was reduced by mothers' effective coping skills (Barbarin et al., 2001). In a study of older mid-adolescents, symptoms of anxiety, depression and aggression were decreased by family support but this was found to be less effective in older adolescents who placed a higher value on support from teachers and friends (Van der Merwe, 2001).

From these studies, it is clear that living in conditions of extreme stress and multiple adversity affects South African parents' abilities to protect and support their children. However, social support is much needed to enhance young people's resilience against the impact of community violence, and therefore supplementary sources of support for young people in these communities need to be identified. The following sections review the role of community-based protective factors in enhancing youth resilience.

2.5.3 Social capital

Many studies support the influence of the neighbourhood community on children and adolescents' mental health and behaviour (Fauth, Leventhal, & Brooks-Gunn, 2007; Kohen, Leventhal, Dahinten, & McIntosh, 2008; Wandersman & Nation, 1998). Researchers report that social processes within the neighbourhood may influence the psychological effects of

neighbourhood adversity (Dorsey & Forehand, 2003; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). In communities characterised by poverty and violence, many young children as well as adolescents spend much of their time moving through the neighbourhood, unsupervised by their parents. The neighbourhood is therefore hugely influential in providing opportunities for young people to form relationships with other children and adults (Fauth et al., 2007; Kohen et al., 2008). These relationships can either increase risks to the child or can provide resources and benefits that help youth form a healthy path into adulthood. Children adopt social and behavioural norms which are communicated to them by role models in the community (Jarrett, Sullivan, & Watkins, 2005). If these role models are positive, and encourage pro-social behaviour, then they will support youth to develop meaningful social roles within their communities and society as a whole (Jarrett et al., 2005). These pro-social adults are part of a community's "social capital" (Sampson et al., 1997). Putnam (2000) defines social capital as "features of social organizations such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 2000, p. 35-36). In the context of communities, social capital refers to the caring and closeness between neighbours, including practical support, and the guidance of children and adolescents by other adults in the neighbourhood (Dorsey & Forehand, 2003; Sampson et al., 1997). It also refers to the sense of community, the opportunities for building relationships and the willingness to become involved in community projects to help solve shared problems (Perkins, Hughey, & Speer, 2002). These resources in communities can help people to cope with stresses, to access opportunities, and to develop to their personal potential (Jarrett et al., 2005).

The social capital of a neighbourhood is likely to have an influence on the quality of relationships a child might be exposed to in their community. Communities with high levels of social capital have networks of adults who model pro-social behaviour for the youth as well as decreasing their perception of danger in the community (Dorsey & Forehand, 2003). This decreasing dangerousness, in turn, has a positive effect on children's anti-social behaviour (Dorsey & Forehand, 2003; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). The adults include teachers, school counsellors, supervisors of after school programmes and sports coaches (Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004; Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Masten & Wright, 2010; Masten & Powell, 2003). Positive adult mentors can also support adolescents by providing them with guidance and advice about how to protect themselves from the dangers of the community: Smokowski and colleagues (1999) found that motivational support was extremely important to their sample of youth living in

low-income, violent communities in America. The youth reported that receiving direct guidance about risks involved in living in these communities, and encouragement to keep safe, was extremely valuable to them.

In South African research, Theron (2007) found that the resilient participants felt strong support from their communities which included practical support such as food, clothing and money for necessities but also advice regarding schooling and safety. Local studies have also found that structures and institutions such as churches, libraries, police services, support groups and youth mentoring programmes, referral services for at-risk children and safe travelling routes act to support positive outcomes in children (Ebersöhn, 2007; Theron, 2007; Theron et al., 2012). Communities which provide opportunities for young people to become involved in education and leisure interests have been found to promote pro-social behaviour (Govender & Killian, 2001; Theron et al., 2012; Ward et al., 2007).

2.5.4 School support

In areas of high levels of violence, where families are facing many obstacles and often cannot provide the support that their children need to strengthen their resilience, school can offer a place of safety, support and protection. Studies have found that a positive school environment, where young people can develop relationships with pro-social adults and peers and are exposed to opportunities to do well and to learn, have a protective effect against the negative psychological consequences of contexts of multiple risk (Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Masten, 2001, 2007; Masten & Obradovic, 2006). Children and adolescents who feel strongly connected to school believe that adults at the school care about them as individuals and want to see them be successful in their learning (Blum & Libby, 2004). Researchers use social bonding theory to suggest that young people who are bonded to people and institutions and value their connection with them, will follow the pro-social rules of these institutions because they do not want to jeopardise these relationships (Furlong, Sharkey, Quirk & Dowdy, 2011). Research indicates that youth who are strongly connected to school are less likely to engage in problem behaviours such as substance abuse and delinquency, and are less likely to experience depression (Barber & Schluterman, 2008; Blum, 2005; Mylant, Ide, Cuevas, & Meehan, 2002).

Children's influence from classmates has been found to be different from the effects of their friendship groups (Karapetian & Grados, 2005). Adolescents can choose their friends but not

their classmates, and they may therefore form friendships with classmates whom they may not have chosen had they not had regular contact in the classroom. These associations could have protective effects on young people at risk.

Teachers are often the only positive adult role models in the lives of children living in communities facing multiple adversities (Bru, Murberg, & Stephens, 2001). Teachers can provide emotional support as well as academic support for children by acting as mentors and counsellors and encouraging self-esteem and confidence. Many studies have found that support from teachers and a feeling of connection to one's school can reduce the harmful effects of difficult situations (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Comer, 1985; Howard et al., 1999).

Benhorin and McMahon (2008) found that perceived social support from teachers and classmates helped to reduce aggressive behaviour in the classroom, especially among those exposed to very high levels of violence. Research has also shown that youth who believe that they have the support of their peers are more motivated to behave in a pro-social manner (Benhorin & McMahon, 2008; Borum, 2000). Studies have found that perceived school support increases resilience against substance abuse and school misconduct (O'Donnell et al., 2002) and protects against depression and the effects of violence exposure (Brookmeyer, Fanti, & Henrich, 2006; Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007; Ozer, 2005). Ludwig and Warren (2009) found that youth who had a positive bond with their school and who perceived more support from their teachers were more hopeful and had fewer negative mental health symptoms than students who had lower levels of connection to school. Smokowski and colleagues (1999) found that support from teachers in inner-city schools helped students to cope with the consequences of living in communities of chronic violence.

South African research has found that schools are one of the best resources for promoting youth resilience in disadvantaged communities (Barbarin et al., 2000; Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ebersöhn, 2007, 2008; Govender & Killian, 2001; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; Smukler, 1990; Theron, 2007; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005; Ward et al., 2007). Schools can potentially provide a safe place (Barbarin et al., 2000), where youth can express emotion and be emotionally contained (Theron, 2007). Well-resourced schools (Ebersöhn, 2007, 2008; Govender & Kilian, 2001) and schools that encourage academic achievement and enriching after-school activities (Ebersöhn, 2007, 2008; Govender & Kilian, 2001; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008; Theron, 2007; Ward et al., 2007) are especially protective. It has been found that a commitment to school has positive effects on children's lives in terms of giving them

confidence and a belief in a positive future (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Phasha, 2010; Theron, 2007). Life skills lessons in school have been found to be a significant protective resource against risk-taking behaviours, as they provide information to adolescents on relevant issues in their lives, warning of the possible consequences of these behaviours (Ebersöhn, 2007; Ebersöhn, 2008; Theron, 2007). In their study, Ward and colleagues (2007) found school support to be negatively associated with depression and conduct problems amongst their sample of children exposed to violence. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2007) examined the interactions between teachers, parents and their communities within the context of AIDS education in Kwa-Zulu-Natal, and concluded that it was crucial for schools to draw on the social capital of the children's communities, for example, involving grandparents, guardians and other community members in the effective education of the children.

South African research has found that teachers themselves are a very important resource. Teachers act as role models in communities where there may be few visible examples of pro-social adults, and encouraging and caring about the learners has been found to contribute significantly to resilient outcomes amongst learners (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ebersöhn, 2007; Ebersöhn, 2008; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; Theron, 2007; Theron et al., 2012; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005). Unfortunately many schools in South Africa are so under-resourced that they cannot provide "emotional containment" and sufficient and consistent encouragement for their learners (Ward et al., 2009). In addition, teachers are also frequently perpetrators of abuse toward the youth (Burton, 2008; Meree & Cherian, 2004). The potential of teachers and schools to enhance children's resilience may therefore not always be actualised.

Studies have found that children are at their most vulnerable to negative influence in after school hours when their parents are often still at work. This may be why after-school activities such as sports, music, art and drama have been found to be associated with pro-social behaviours, as they provide activities for youth which prevent them from becoming exposed to violence and high-risk activities on the streets (Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Masten, 2001; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Masten & Powell, 2003). While after-school activities may result in pro-social behavioural outcomes, on the other hand, it may be that pro-social children are more attracted to these kinds of activities.

There is a lack of research in South Africa examining the influence of after-school activities on the adjustment of young people, however one study found that high school youth involved in conventional after-school activities demonstrated lower levels of anxiety (Ward et al.,

2007). Wegner, Flisher, Muller & Lombard (2009) conducted a literature review of studies examining the link between leisure boredom and risk behaviour among adolescents and found that surprisingly few studies have focused on leisure boredom and risk behaviour in adolescents, despite much research having cited boredom being associated with risk behaviour. The only study focusing on this subject in South Africa found high levels of leisure boredom among black and coloured adolescents in Cape Town (Wegner et al., 2006). The researchers comment that this finding may have been due to the fact that most of their sample of adolescents lived in low-socioeconomic conditions and lacked access to leisure resources (Wegner et al., 2006).

2.5.5 Peer support

Studies have found that having positive, quality friendships can help to reduce the effects of abuse on children's self-confidence (Bolger & Patterson, 2003; Cicchetti & Toth, 1995). Pro-social friends have been identified as a significant protective factor against anti-social behaviours, such as delinquency, for children living in high-violence communities (Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004; Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Luthar, et al., 2000; Masten, 2001; Masten & Wright, 2010) and studies have shown that young people who believe that they have the support of their peers are more motivated to behave in a pro-social manner (Benhorin & McMahon, 2008; Borum, 2000). Howard, Budge and McKay (2005) found that perceived support from peers was very important in helping young people from violent communities to complete high school. However some studies have produced mixed results. Rosario et al. (2008) found that a lack of peer support was related to more internalising symptoms, but only for boys. Kliewer, Murelle, Meija, Torres De, and Angold, (2002) studied Columbian adolescents exposed to domestic violence and their results did not find that peer support buffered against the development of anxiety in these teenagers.

Research has shown that various factors have an effect on children's ability to form protective pro-social friendships. Living in a violent area can affect children's social skills and the manner in which they interact with each other, as they will often learn the behaviour which has been modelled for them and act out these aggressive behaviours in their relationships with friends and peers (Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994). Children who have suffered maltreatment and who develop conduct problems have been found to frequently

struggle in their relationships with peers (Hymel, Rubin, Rowden, & LeMare, 1990), which may decrease the potential of this support base.

However, peer support does not always mean a pro-social influence on children. The kind of peer support a child receives will depend on the nature of their friendship group. Some peers may reinforce pro-social behaviours and others may reinforce high risk behaviours such as delinquency (Allen et al., 2005; Seidman & Pederson, 2003). Some studies have shown that peer influence has the biggest impact on problem behaviours among youth, including drug use and anti-social behaviour (Borum, 2000; Dubow et al., 1997; Garnier & Stein, 2002). Children often gravitate towards other children who share their characteristics, such as a tendency towards risk-taking or aggression (Earls, Cairns, & Mercy, 1993), where peers may reinforce and reward deviant behaviour such as violence, alcohol abuse and marijuana use. Dishion, McCord and Poulin (1999) describe this phenomenon as “deviancy training” (p. 756). Therefore some peer groups can benefit children by buffering against the effects of exposure to community violence and some peers can increase the risk of exposure to violence and its negative impacts through encouraging high risk behaviours in their friends (McIntyre, 2000; Salzinger et al., 2007).

Few South African studies have focused on the influence of peers on the resilience of children living in violent communities, however those that have done so have found peer support to be protective (Barbarin et al., 2000; Germann, 2005; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008; Pillay & Nesengani, 2006; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005), primarily because it offers opportunities for children to feel a sense of belonging and positive identity (Pillay & Nesengani, 2006), and help with problem solving (Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005). A recent study by Malindi and Theron (2010) found that pro-social peers helped to promote resilient outcomes for each other by sharing coping methods and encouraging each other toward pro-social behaviour. South African research findings also support the association between peer group delinquency and conduct problems among adolescents (Ward et al., 2007). Therefore it appears that for South African youth also, support from peers can buffer against the negative effects of exposure to violence, but only if the support comes from pro-social peer groups.

2.6 The Influence of Culture on Resilience in South Africa

Recently, South African research has followed the international trend in starting to focus on the ways in which culture shapes the resilience of young people. Two recent studies have

looked at an “Africentric” understanding of resilience. Theron and colleagues (2012) conducted a study on the resilience of Basotho youth as described by 11 Basotho adults from a low socioeconomic, rural community and found that their descriptions provided an “Africentric” understanding of resilience. Theron and colleagues (2012) understand an “Africentric” view of resilience to mean a much stronger focus on a collective, community sense of support, kinship ties and spirituality, rather than support from individuals which has been found to protect American and European youth (Garmezy, 1993; Wright & Maston, 2006). Community support involved a collective acknowledgement that the young people were every adult’s responsibility, and each older person was responsible for passing on norms for living well and for teaching pro-social, spiritual and traditional values. Participants emphasised the collaboration between these support systems. In addition, peer support encouraged resilience when it was positive peer pressure which helped the youth to adopt certain pro-social behaviours which were supported by the community (Theron, Theron, & Malindi, 2012). In her later study of the life stories of two resilient black university students, Theron (2013), found similar Africentric processes that encouraged the resilient outcomes of these students. This strong emphasis on collective community support was also found in Dass-Brailsford’s (2005) study of resilient black university students and Phasha’s (2010) study of black youth who had been exposed to sexual abuse. The social support that assisted in their resilient outcomes was not limited to support from nuclear family members but underlined the importance of community connection in encouraging positive adaptation for participants in situations of adversity which taxed the strength of their families.

2.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, many studies have examined how individual, family, community and cultural factors in an individual’s life combine to produce a wide variety of psychological responses to living in conditions of community violence and multiple adversity. The interactions that create resilience in an individual’s life appear to be complex and dependent upon a variety of factors in a variety of combinations. Resilience levels may also increase or decrease at certain times in an individual’s life, making the concept fluid and changeable rather than a fixed attribute. Research has emphasised the importance of examining risk and protective factors from the individual to the wider cultural levels, to understand why some young people demonstrate positive outcomes, while others develop negative behaviour and mental health

problems in similar situations of adversity (O’Keefe, 1997). What is clear is that resilience is most likely to occur when the ordinary contexts of children’s lives are relatively stable and when their families, schools and friendship groups are able to carry out pro-social and culturally acceptable tasks (Masten, 2001; Ungar, 2008; Ward et al., 2007). Masten explains that resilience is not the result of unusual individual strengths or abnormal environments, but it is an everyday phenomenon, an *ordinary magic* that is nurtured by basic systems, and it occurs when young people in adverse circumstances work with their families, peers, school, and communities to make the most of their resources (Masten, 2001, p. 227). Masten describes how the resilience field promotes intervention models which are focused on strengthening assets in the lives of children at risk to improve their chances of positive coping:

“Interventions that target change in attachment relationships, parenting, self-efficacy or mastery motivation, emotional or behavioural self-regulation, and problem-solving ability are directed at fundamental human adaptive systems. The resilience literature strongly suggests that when these adaptive systems are operating well, capacity for resilience in the face of challenge will be good” (Masten, 2011, p. 502).

Masten describes the need to use the knowledge learned from resilience studies and apply it to interventions to benefit children and families at risk as well as advocating open communication and knowledge sharing between all stakeholders in order to best assist interventions in achieving this goal (Masten, 2011).

At present, there is little research on resilience in the South African context compared with the relative wealth of research on violence exposure and its negative sequelae. Given the number of communities in the country facing multiple obstacles with very little support, this is therefore an area that needs urgent focus. In 2010, Theron and Theron conducted a critical review of 23 studies on youth resilience in South Africa in the last two decades. They concluded that South African conceptualisations of resilience reflect international research findings, as they view resilience as the product of individual traits combined with protective resources in an interaction between the person and his or her context. However, the researchers criticise the studies for focusing only on two or three categories of resources, usually personal and community resources, and creating a “laundry list” of protective factors (Theron & Theron, 2010). This does not explain why the identified factors are supportive of positive outcomes (Luthar & Brown, 2007; Luthar, Sawyer & Brown, 2006). These studies

therefore do not explore the concept of resilience as a complex transaction. The interactions between protective and risk factors need to be further explored and better understood in order to be able to build on family and community strengths and to better construct interventions to support youth to overcome some of the negative consequences associated with living in high risk environments. Theron and Theron (2010) comment further “that there was little theorising about the processes, pathways or transactions informing their complexity and so, compared to more recent progress in international resilience-focused research, South African research is lagging” (Theron & Theron, 2010, p. 6). Resilience research needs to develop theoretical models to explain how and why these factors protect youth. Theron and Theron (2010) recommend that South African researchers explore factors and processes that are unique to particular contexts and cultures in South Africa and which nurture resilience in youth. Other researchers agree with these sentiments; Germann (2005), Ebersöhn (2007) and Dass-Brailsford (2005) recommend creating models of resilience that are based around South African culture and use these to construct interventions which are informed by unique South African structures, beliefs and practices.

One important intervention in South Africa which has the potential to nurture resilience amongst youth is community-based youth leadership programmes. These programmes provide social support to youth who live in disadvantaged communities and have very little family support (Scales, Benson, & Mannes, 2006; Borden, Perkins, Villarruel, & Stone, 2005). They provide youth with positive adult role models, offering opportunities to form relationships with pro-social peers, they foster in young people the skills to cope with situations of adversity, and often also provide counselling for trauma (Hansen, Larson & Dwarkin, 2003; Villarruel, Perkins, Borden, & Keith, 2003). They provide a safe space and encourage the adoption of positive future expectations in the youth to make the most of their opportunities and to aim to lead well adapted lives (Borden et al., 2005; Perkins, Borden, Villarruel, Carlton-Hug, & Stone, 2007). These programmes support resilience in young people but they may also attract youth who are already resilient in some form, who see the benefit of joining these institutions, and who choose to make use of these alternative support facilities. These programmes offer an excellent site to study the resilience processes of the children who are drawn to take part in them.

2.8 Chapter summary

This section has reviewed literature on the psychological impact of exposure to chronic violence on children and adolescents, as well as research on the factors which support youth to demonstrate resilient outcomes in these contexts. From this review it is clear that there is a lack of research in South Africa on the processes that promote resilient outcomes among youth in high violence communities, particularly qualitative research focusing on the experiences of youth at risk. The current study therefore aims to explore resilience factors, and the interaction between them, in the life narratives of members of a youth development programme in a low-income, high violence community in Cape Town. This research, by aiming to contribute some understanding about what supports children in these circumstances, may assist in the creation of effective policies and interventions for young people at risk of developing mental health and behavioural problems.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodological approach of this research study. The chapter begins with a description of the aims of the research and the context of the study. The chosen research design, the sampling method and the means of data collection are then outlined and are followed by an explanation of the method of data analysis used. The chapter concludes with a discussion of reflexivity issues and ethical considerations.

3.1 Aims

This study aims to explore the life experiences of young people involved in a youth development programme in a high-violence, low-socioeconomic area in Cape Town, with the aim of identifying resilience factors that may have influenced them to want to involve themselves in improving their community. Identifying these factors can inform intervention initiatives that aim to develop resilience amongst children in South Africa and other contexts of multiple adversity.

3.2 Context of the Research Study: CASE Organisation and the ‘Youth-in-Action’ Programme

The CASE (Community Action Towards a Safer Environment) organisation is a community intervention organisation, located in Hanover Park in the Western Cape. CASE was started in 2001 by a clinical psychologist. The organisation originally started as the ‘Trauma Room’ project, a response to requests from the local schools for trauma rooms to be set up in each school to support the large numbers of staff and learners traumatised by gang violence.

Hanover Park is a low income area with high levels of illiteracy and unemployment, with many people living in small quarters (Benjamin, 2013). The 2011 South African census data revealed that out of 20 512 people in Hanover Park, aged over 20 years, 55 percent have attained a lower level than matriculation. Of the total labour force, 41.7 percent are unemployed; 38.7 percent live on less than R1600 a month (13503) and 10 percent (3462

people) have no income at all. Gang activity is rife in the area and the inhabitants are victims and witnesses of high levels of violence (Benjamin, 2013).

The Trauma Room project expanded to become the CASE organisation, based first at Morgensorn Primary School and then at Mount View High School. The organisation took on full-time staff and started targeting a number of different groups in the community for intervention programmes. CASE started to run personal growth and counselling training workshops for the local community of Hanover Park and has trained and placed lay counsellors in all the schools in the area. CASE now runs a variety of support groups including a men's group, women's group, teenage pregnancy group, substance abuse support group, a Kid's Club and the Youth-in-Action group for adolescents which has roughly thirty members a year. The Youth-in-Action group involves projects including a Nature Conservation and Hiking group, MADD (the music, arts, dance and drama group), and the Kid's Club committee. Youth-in-Action is run by a full-time youth coordinator and volunteers supervise the groups and organise outings, camps and fundraising projects with the youth. The youth members of the programme are very active in the area; working on vegetable gardens at the school, renovating the school library, taking part in protest marches and fundraising are among their past projects. When involved with CASE activities, the youth wear the CASE sweatshirt with its distinctive black and burnt orange colours which the local community can immediately identify.

This researcher has volunteered for the CASE organisation since January 2008 as a Youth-in-Action Coordinator and as a trauma counsellor in one of the primary schools. During this time I have become interested in the influences on the resilience of the members, how the youth understand and make meaning of their life experiences, and how they come to the decision to involve themselves in community upliftment.

3.3 Guiding Epistemological Framework: Phenomenological Hermeneutics

The study was conducted from within a phenomenological hermeneutic epistemology. This approach aims to understand and interpret the meaning that subjects give to their experiences and behaviour regarding a particular phenomenon or concept (Cresswell, 1998). The phenomenon is studied in its context with the view that it is impossible to understand it apart from its context (Cresswell, 1998). Rennie (1999) describes hermeneutics as "the interpretation of written and oral texts about matters that include human experience and

social conduct” (p. 3). Rennie (1999) goes on to explain that the practice of hermeneutics originated in antiquity, from the interpretation of religious texts, and involves no strict rules but emphasizes the reader’s understanding of the material. Spinelli (2005) explains that phenomenological hermeneutics is focused on examining the experiences of participants and identifying the common meanings that they make to understand the phenomenon under investigation. Whitehead (2004) argues that the epistemology of phenomenological hermeneutics is suitable for guiding a study exploring a topic about which little is known, as the focus of the philosophy is on understanding the lived experiences of the participants and the meanings that they make of it. This approach can shed light on what the issues and concerns around an experience are, and can highlight the significance of a particular event or phenomenon. Whitehead (2004) warns that the interpretation of qualitative research findings must always be kept closely linked to the context of its original text otherwise the trustworthiness of the analysis is threatened. Whitehead (2004) explains that “hermeneutic phenomenology tries to address this by remaining close to the original text and uncovering biases for the scrutiny of others” (Whitehead, 2004, p. 514). Therefore in a study using this guiding philosophy, substantial amounts of original data are used to support theoretical claims.

This epistemological framework was chosen for this study as this framework allows for the exploration of how each young person has made meaning of their experiences as well as the common themes emerging from the group as a whole, which would add to the knowledge on how to support resilience in vulnerable youth. The methodology chosen to suit this broad framework is a qualitative design which is appropriate when exploring individual’s life experiences and choices, as it is able to generate rich description of complicated phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). A qualitative approach is appropriate as it seeks to understand the meaning of the experience that is under examination as opposed to trying to explain or generalise it to other populations (Fouché & Delport, 2005).

3.4 Study Design

The design chosen for this study is that of the multiple case study method. Yin (2003) defines a case study as “an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident ” (p. 18). Yin (2003) explains that the case study method

would be used when a researcher wants to understand a real life phenomenon in depth but needs to gain a clear understanding of the context in which this phenomenon occurs in order to do so. Other research methods such as experiments and surveys fail to include such a focus on the context of the subject of research. Yin (2003) views the multiple case study method as a variant, along with the single case study, of the case study design. In quantitative research methods, a sampling design is chosen to maximize the ability to generalize the results. However in the case study method, generalization of results to a broad population is not the desired outcome (Stake, 1995). According to Yin (2003), the value of the case study lies in investigating ‘how’ and ‘why’ phenomena occur. In arguing against the common concern that case study data provides little basis of generalization, Yin explains that case studies “are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes” (Yin, 2003, p. 15). This means that the goal of conducting a case study analysis will be to expand and add evidence to the support of a theory, and not to add to the knowledge regarding the statistical frequency of the phenomenon under study. In multiple case study designs, case studies are replicated to provide more support for the particular theory under study (Yin, 2008). The rich theoretical framework developed by analyzing case studies “needs to state the conditions under which a particular phenomenon is likely to be found as well as the conditions under which it is not likely to be found” (Yin, 2003, p. 54). This theoretical framework will be able to be generalized to new cases and if new cases do not work as predicted with the framework then the theoretical framework must be modified. Based on this foundation, Yin (2003) recommends that the case study method is suitable for descriptive research into areas where there is little currently known and for which the context is of importance (Yin, 2003). This strength makes the case study method particularly appropriate to use when the research subject is about complex human experiences.

The multiple case study method is therefore suitable for the current study in many ways. The aim of the study is to provide a rich description of individual and group experiences of youth resilience in the particular context of living in a violent community. The case study’s emphasis on the importance of the context in which the phenomenon occurs makes it very suitable for this study’s aim. The boundaries between the youth’s experiences of resilience and the adverse conditions of their community are so intertwined that they could not be separated, nor would it be appropriate to do so given the goal of the research. Youth resilience is acknowledged to be a complicated phenomenon involving many factors and

processes and therefore the rich description and scope to focus on many variables allowed in the case study design makes it the most appropriate research method to be used for this study.

3.5 Sampling

Participants were recruited through purposeful sampling which is a systematic non-probabilistic sampling method. Specific groups of people are identified who either possess characteristics or live in a context that is relevant to the phenomenon being studied. This approach to sampling allows the researcher to include a wide range of types of informants who may be able to provide a variety of viewpoints on the phenomenon, thereby increasing the knowledge gained (Mays & Pope, 1995). Stake (2000) argues that although purposeful sampling does not produce findings which are highly generalizable to other populations, in an area about which little is currently known this technique provides an “opportunity to learn,” which is very valuable (p. 447). In this sampling method, coupled with a qualitative research methodology, respondents can provide a depth of rich and detailed information about the topic investigated (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The case study sample used in this study consisted of twenty cases: ten girls and ten boys who are members of the “Youth-in-Action” youth development programme at the CASE organization. The researcher had volunteered for CASE as an assistant youth coordinator in 2008 and continued to volunteer for the organization in 2009 and 2010 at the time of the study. I approached the youth group at two youth meetings, explained the research and asked for volunteers. The young people who volunteered were mostly members who had been involved in the organization for periods between one year and three years. At the time, the youth group had twenty eight members. The twenty participants were chosen from a pool of twenty three volunteers. Five members did not volunteer for the study. Two of the volunteers withdrew their assent to participate in the study as they were grade twelve students involved in extra classes at the time of the interviews and did not have time to participate in an interview, and one volunteer changed her mind about participating. The participants were made up of learners from all three of the high schools in Hanover Park, Mount View, Groenvlei and Crystal schools. The twenty participants were between 16 and 19 years of age. Of the girls, six were 17 years, one was 19, one 18 and two were 16. Of the boys, one is 19 and there are three of 18, three of 17 and three of 16. Seventeen gave English as their home

language and three gave Afrikaans. The final sample therefore constitutes the majority of the youth members of the Youth-in-Action group.

The participants were not formally measured to obtain resilience ratings, however, from the researcher's personal contact with the participants in her capacity as their counsellor and youth programme coordinator, the researcher knows all the participants well and feels that she can say that the participants demonstrate resilient behaviour on many levels. In contrast to many adolescents in the community, eighteen of the twenty youth have not dropped out of school; they value their education and achieve well academically. None of the participants are involved in gangs, they are vocal about rejecting violence, and they do not abuse substances. None have fallen pregnant, nor fathered children that we know of. Many of the participants are leaders at their individual schools including being on the Student Representative Council of learners and being Club captains and are known to the teachers and mentors as young people who are performing well academically. Many are also youth leaders in their churches. They are active in protecting and supporting younger children in the community as well as being involved in projects for the improvement of life for the whole community. A brief profile of each participant is provided in Appendix A.

3.6 Data Collection

The study used individual semi-structured interviews as the instrument of data collection. Individual interviews are an excellent instrument for qualitative research as they are able to generate "rich, vivid material" (Gillham, 2000, p. 10) which can be used to understand the meanings that individuals attach to their experiences as well as seeing the similarities across a group's experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). In-depth individual interviews were chosen for this study in order to generate rich descriptions of the life experiences of the participants and record their understandings of their resilience. This style of instrument allowed the researcher to gain understandings of the individuals involved as well as collect the common themes across all twenty of the interviews. Individual interviews provide a unique opportunity to build rapport and trust compared to other methods of collection and this assists in the generation of good quality data (Gillham, 2000). Typically, the case study research design draws on multiple forms of data such as focus groups or video recording (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), therefore the single interview per participant is a limitation of this study.

A semi-structured interview schedule allows the researcher flexibility to explore a broad area of interest, and the participant freedom in expressing what he or she deems relevant for them. The semi-structured interview is guided by an interview schedule but not dictated by it. The participant can therefore introduce angles that the researcher had not thought of. In this relationship the participant is regarded as the expert on the subject and should therefore be allowed maximum opportunity to tell his or her story (Smith & Osborne, 2003). However, the consistent use of an interview guide increases the comparability of the data across participants (Smith & Osborne, 2003). The interview guide involves broad, open-ended questions. In the semi-structured interview technique, the researcher is concerned with being open to the participant's individual way of talking about the topics that the researcher has already identified as relevant and other topics that may be relevant to the participant (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Occasionally, this method gives the participant the freedom to digress from the topic and the interviewer has to decide when to support the participant and inquire in greater detail into this new area or whether to guide the participant back to the central topic. These decisions can only be taken in the interview itself, and this therefore requires the interviewer to be highly sensitive to the participant and the course of the interview. The researcher needs to be aware of what has already been said and its relevance for the research question.

Semi-structured individual interviews of approximately two hours each were used to generate the data. The interview schedule is provided as Appendix B. The researcher conducted the interviews in after-school hours, on the premises of Mount View High School, where the CASE offices are located.

The researcher was concerned that the young participants would be intimidated by the formality of the interview and the tape recording process and not respond freely to a set of straightforward questions. The researcher therefore decided to design an interview schedule which would inspire enjoyment and confidence in the participants. The 'Life Story' interview protocol designed by MacAdams (1993), who uses a 'life as a book' analogy to describe one's life experiences, was used as a guide in constructing the interview schedule. In his life story model of identity, MacAdams (1993) argues that identity itself takes the form of a story, complete with settings, scenes, characters, plot and themes. Looking at their past, present and future as a story, gives young people a sense of meaning and purpose (MacAdams, 1993).

In the interview schedule, the participant was asked to divide his or her life into chapters, naming each chapter and describing significant memories, key people, high and low points, problems and stressors and future chapters, including hopes and expectations for the future. This style did not involve the researcher asking the participants specific questions, but asking broad questions and then more specific ones regarding the experiences that the participant chose to describe. Using this structure, the participant was given freedom to choose which experiences they felt were important for understanding them as individuals. The broad questions were guided by the literature on resilience, for example, focusing broadly on individual characteristics, family and peer support. The interviews were conducted in English and the questions were phrased so as to allow the adolescent participants to feel comfortable in that they understood the words used. Although some of the participants spoke Afrikaans as their home language, all the participants said that they were comfortable to speak English in the interview. The participants were generally proficient in English as Mount View High school uses English as its medium of teaching. Occasionally the participants used a colloquialism that the researcher did not understand; the researcher would then ask for the meaning to gain clarification. The interview data were captured on a digital recorder and transcribed by the researcher within three days of recording it.

3.7 Credibility, Transferability and Reflexivity

Qualitative research involves the interpretation of people's stories, and since interpretation is a subjective process, this calls into question the credibility of the research findings. In quantitative research, credibility involves strict measures of validity which is defined as, "the extent to which the instrument yields the same results on repeated trials" (Terre Blanche et al., 2006, p. 152) and reliability, explained as "the degree to which a measure does what it is intended to do" (Terre Blanche et al., 2006, p. 147). However qualitative research is less concerned with exact and scientific attempts to uncover the 'truth' or repeat outcomes in future studies, but rather attempts to provide rich description of the participant's understandings of their experiences in their particular setting. Lieblich and colleagues explain a qualitative research perspective of the 'truth' as a multifaceted reality which is influenced by the researcher's subjectivity (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998).

Credibility in qualitative studies, therefore, refers to the extent to which results or findings are authentic, genuine and trustworthy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The question which must be

asked is: Are the findings a true reflection of the group being interviewed? In qualitative studies, the degree of research validity is increased by strategies like a longer interview time and semi-structured interview schedules which allow participants greater control over choosing the content of the interviews. Another method to ensure that maximum validity is achieved for qualitative research is to use participant feedback (Yardley, 2008). Participants are given the opportunity to examine the researcher's findings and to clarify their views if they are not correctly represented (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Yardley, 2008). In this study, a focus group was held with ten of the participants to gain feedback regarding the analysis. The focus group involved a detailed discussion of the results of the study and concluded in the participants strongly supporting the findings and conclusions which thereby increased the credibility of the results (this will be discussed further in the final chapter).

For studies using interviewing as the research method, the researcher himself or herself is the instrument of data collection. The researcher's personal and social characteristics, therefore, have an influence on the data collection, as well as the analysis of the data, and the interpretation of the data will also be coloured by his or her own biases, values and beliefs (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Goffman, 1959). Hermeneutic phenomenology particularly emphasizes the need to recognize the influence of the researcher on the research process and the interpretation of a study. Consequently there is a responsibility on the researcher to constantly reflect on his or her own bias during the entire research process in order to support the dependability of the interpretation of the data. Although this reflexivity will not completely resolve any bias, researchers should consistently reflect on their impact on the research to ensure the validity of the findings (Yardley, 2008).

Furthermore, a text may be analysed differently by different researchers who may produce varying themes in the resulting findings, however it is very important that subsequent readers of the study should be able to trace the researcher's decision route clearly from the original text to the interpretation, this will increase the "trustworthiness" of the findings (Guba & Lincoln 1989, pp. 76–77). Transferability is the qualitative research method equivalent to the external validity requirement of quantitative research and refers to the possibility of being able to compare the findings of a study to similar samples in the broader population (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). To this end, I include thick descriptions of the participants' accounts so that their stories are positioned in their particular context and the risk of misinterpretation is reduced.

In the current study, I as the researcher was known to the participants as the coordinator of their youth group two years before the study. Therefore the participants knew me personally and had individual relationships with me and this prior relationship will have affected the way in which the participants spoke to me, and the content that they chose to speak about. It is possible that the youth trusted me and were able to speak more openly than they would have to a stranger, however, because they knew that I had been involved in the CASE organization they might have felt that they could only express positive views regarding CASE in the interview. I differed from my participants in terms of my race, age and socio-economic circumstances as well as my gender with half the sample. These factors will have influenced the research according to what associations each factor has for each individual participant. The participants might have felt that these differences prevented me from understanding some of the realities of their lives and therefore they might have chosen not to speak of certain things that they would have expressed had the researcher been a person with more similarities to them. I attempted to prevent this from happening by taking pains to explain that I wanted them to express whatever they felt was important in their own way and not to exclude anything because of fear of judgment or misunderstanding from me.

Reflexivity also requires that I, as the researcher, examine my own motivations for wanting to conduct this research. As I was involved with CASE and had relationships with the participants as their youth coordinator, I had a strong desire to contribute to CASE's knowledge of how best to support the resilience of the young people in the community of Hanover Park. In a later chapter, consideration is given to how my own position, experiences and motivations may have influenced the interpretations and conclusions drawn in the study.

3.8 Data Analysis

This study made use of data coding techniques from the grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Grounded theory involves inducing themes from the research data for the purpose of generating theory (Charmaz, 2003). This method examines the data itself to find categories of meaning, rather than attempting to fit the data into predetermined categories, which is particularly appropriate when describing phenomena about which little is currently known. It is also able to “capture the complexity of problems and the richness of everyday life” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 91).

Grounded theory methods can be used to study individual processes, relationships between people and the effect of wider social influences on people (Charmaz, 2003). Grounded theory has been influenced by both the positivist and interpretive paradigms in that the method uses systematic techniques to study subjects, but focuses on how people create meanings from their experiences, which is an interpretive principle (Charmaz, 2003).

Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that grounded theory methods are also suited to studies which aim to provide practical guidelines for future research into the areas concerned (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The method's suitability to this task lies in its focus on the detail of experiences and understandings of the phenomenon gathered during data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This feature of the method makes it appropriate for use in this study as the research aim is to add to the literature on resilience in the South African context for the practical use of organisations which support youth resilience. Grounded theory also provides techniques for working with large amounts of qualitative data (Pigeon & Henwood, 1997), making this a suitable method for analyzing twenty in-depth interviews. Grounded theory is also compatible with the principles of the guiding epistemology of phenomenological hermeneutics in that it recognizes that participants have constructed their own meanings and understandings of their realities and that the final analyses will be the researcher's own interpretations, not a universal 'truth' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this way, the methodology encourages the researcher to be reflexive and transparent in describing the choices made regarding the methodology in order to increase the credibility of the research findings (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997).

Using grounded theory analysis techniques, each transcript was closely read several times in order for the researcher to gain maximum familiarity with the data. When this was achieved, each phrase in the interview transcripts was analysed and coded in order to identify all the possible concepts occurring in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This is known as open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The concepts were then grouped into categories based on a process of constant comparison of similarities and differences, known as axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). At this stage the researcher begins the interpretation of the data by deciding which data should be integrated into the analysis, with the researcher being guided in this by the research question. Therefore the categories that are the most relevant to the research question are selected from the developed codes. Codes were constantly compared to reduce overlap, and categories were then refined as more data was analysed (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997). The method of negative case analysis was used in analysing the data for

evidence which would disconfirm or contradict the emergent themes in order to promote trustworthiness of the results and conclusions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The names for the codes and categories were taken from direct quotes from the data or from the resilience literature (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Categories were gradually combined into broader overarching codes, which is known in grounded theory as selective coding, and finally into a few core concepts around which the other developed categories were grouped (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was gained from the University of Cape Town and the Western Cape Education Department. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the director of CASE organization, the Youth director, and the Mount View High School principal.

3.9.1 Informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from the parents of the participants in a letter detailing the aims of the study and offering the contact details of the researcher. The informed consent sheet is provided as Appendix C. The participants returned the signed letter of consent from their parents before being interviewed. Informed consent involves the right that the participants have to know that they are being researched, the right to be informed about the nature of the research and the right to withdraw at any time from the research (De Vos, 2005).

Participants aged 18 years and older signed informed consent letters and a similar letter, that of informed assent, was given to participants under 18 years of age at the beginning of each interview, which detailed the purpose and aims of the study. The informed assent sheet is provided as Appendix D. The document clearly explained the issues of confidentiality, the possible risks, benefits and the right of the participant to withdraw at any stage of the interview. The letter provided the participant with the credentials of the researcher and her contact details as well as those of her supervisor. It also explained that the purpose of the research would be to add to the knowledge on what supports resilient behaviour in young people living in violent communities for the future benefit of such communities. This document was read and signed by the participant at the beginning of the interview.

3.9.2 Confidentiality

The assurance of confidentiality with regard to the research data is crucial in developing a trusting relationship between the researcher and the interview participants. The participants need to know that they are in a safe space where they may talk freely of sensitive, personal experiences and that their words will be shown care and respect in their distribution (De Vos, 2005). Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by keeping the data on the researcher's personal computer under password protection and all names being changed to pseudonyms to protect the identities of participants, their families and friends. Participants were assured that the raw interview data would only be viewed by the researcher and her supervisor.

3.9.3 Nonmaleficence

Psychological research has a responsibility to participants against harm incurred through involvement in the research, and this is even more important for vulnerable groups such as children. Psychological research has a responsibility to participants against harm incurred through involvement in the research, and this is even more important for vulnerable groups such as children (King & Churchill, 2000). The researcher assessed that in this study, the participants may be vulnerable to psychological harm in the form of sadness and uncontained feelings, and re-traumatisation by talking about traumas they have experienced which they have not dealt with. This possibility was discussed with the participants and the voluntary nature of their participation was again stressed with assurances that their comfort and emotional well-being was the researcher's highest priority and would always take precedence over the research aims. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher also provided each participant with a printed sheet informing them of counseling services available to them if the interviews brought up feelings that needed to be contained.

3.9.4 Possible benefits for the participants

The possible benefit to the participants in this study was perceived to be the opportunity given to the participants to allow their voices to be heard. The viewpoints and life stories of disadvantaged young people from violent communities in South Africa are very seldom recorded and there is very little academic research on resilient youth in South Africa. When this was explained to the participants they appeared to be excited and proud to be able to

share their experiences and to acknowledge the people who had supported them in their lives. Furthermore all the participants expressed that they found the interview process enjoyable and found it interesting to think about the people and structures which had influence in their lives.

3.9.5 Research with adolescents

There are a number of features that are unique to the conduct of youth research. The most common predicament for researchers working with children is that parental consent for the study cannot always be obtained. Fortunately, parental consent was obtained for all the participants in this study. A common controversial subject in the literature on research with disadvantaged adolescents is that of incentives or rewards for participation. Most authors agree that a substantial payment to participants would constitute bribery or be regarded as unduly influencing participation and therefore affecting the results of the study, which is not good research practice. Others regard a modest reward as a legitimate acknowledgement for time and effort given in participation. In this study, the interviews were all scheduled immediately after school finished and a small lunch was provided to make up for the delay in getting home to eat.

The laws protecting minors from child abuse place a legal obligation on adults to report any abuse that the child discloses to them. The researcher must prepare for the possibility of their minor participant disclosing in the interview that they are currently in an abusive situation. This would mean that the researcher would need to break confidentiality and report this abuse to the child protection authorities. In this study, I informed the participant of this eventuality before the research began and the participants signed their understanding and consent to this. Fortunately this situation did not occur in this study.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter looked at the particular qualitative design that guided this research process. The methods of participant selection, data collection and analyses were considered as well as the ethical implications of the study. The issue of reflexivity was discussed as well as the ways in which the validity of the findings were ensured. In the next chapter the findings of the data analysis are examined and discussed

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the individual and social factors common in the life stories of the participants, with a view to understanding whether and how these may have influenced them to become long-standing members of the CASE Youth-in-Action community programme. The themes which emerged from the data were grouped into four sections. In order to understand the processes of resilience in this sample of young people, the risks and adversities with which they are challenged need to be understood. Therefore, the first section of this chapter explores the themes which emerged from the participants' narratives of growing up in the high-violence community of Hanover Park. The second section examines the intrapersonal characteristics common to the majority of the participants, and this is followed by an exploration of the common social support factors that the participants have experienced. The final section then focuses on the participants' individual pathways which led them to joining the programme and the factors which motivated them to stay engaged as long-term members.

4.1 Growing up in Hanover Park: A Context of Multiple Adversity

"I live in a community with plenty of gangsterism, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, unemployment... you name it, you get it in my community." – Antonio

The first question in the interview schedule broadly asked the participants to describe what it is like living in Hanover Park. Each participant responded without hesitation and spoke at length of the multiple kinds of risks that residents in their community face. They described their own experiences of risk situations as well as risks that are common in the community and which residents often experience on a daily basis. What became clear is that the participants who have chosen to become involved in the CASE youth development programme have not been protected from exposure to violence and domestic difficulties; they have all experienced significant adversities at multiple levels. This section briefly outlines the most common themes in the participant's accounts of adversity in Hanover Park.

4.1.1 Incubated in violence

Participants reported that in their community many people are involved in gangs, from older people to young children. They were quick to describe the gang violence in the community, seeming to be grateful for the opportunity to describe to an outsider what they have to experience on a daily basis. At the same time they often spoke with a tone indicating some desensitization to the violence, speaking about shootings, murder and assault without much visible emotion.

“I grew up seeing a lot of gangsters, people getting murdered or I would hear stories, people speaking at school of people getting murdered.” - Jody

“Like the gang war in 2006, about 36 people died in Hanover Park. Now a week or two ago, they shot a guy and dumped him just so.” -Abdul

“The gang has kind of become a part of our life...like last night, about thirty gunshots close by, you can distinguish the different type of guns that was used.” - Abdul

“It was like this in 2006 but it was only in one area, then it was quiet, now it’s all over Hanover Park. It involved other gangs, they all shooting each other now. CASE had a march against it and on that day someone was shot. And yesterday someone was shot at the hospital, so now the hospital is closed down. Twenty got shot in two weeks and six got killed. Twenty two from yesterday. Eight innocent people, and the rest is gangsters. Two babies got killed in cross-fire.” - Jody

Hanover Park is a place where news spreads quickly and when there is an incident of violence, many others hear about it quickly. Jared explains this by saying:

“In Hanover Park everyone knows everyone, and if something happens somebody knows about it immediately.” - Jared

“They want to fight again, now, the big gangs. One of the Ghettos did shoot one of the Americans dead last night. Now there’s going to be shooting. There by us, over the field.” - Moegamat

Of the girls, no one spoke of being victimized by community violence. However, five boys described being victims of gang violence:

“They did stab me in my neck. I was turning the corner with my friends and then three boys come and they hit my one friend, and I said why did you hit him and then they started hitting us too, and then the one boy stabbed me.” - Daniel

“They chase me with a knife. Two years ago, this boy he stabbed me here in my back. I was for nearly a month in hospital.” – Tyron

“This week someone tried to rob me, in my court! (block of flats) I know him! he did grow up in the court with me!... I want to say why do you want to do that and you stay at the same place?” - Moegamat

‘Just the past week I was actually assaulted by the son of the leader of the Americans. So he assaulted me with a lot of other boys, so I was re-arranged. Ja, they hit me with a hockey stick.” - Jared

Eleven of the youth, (five boys and six girls) have known someone that has been a victim of violence, from family members to friends:

“My friend also, he was shot dead. He was my best friend. He was eighteen.” - Moegamat

“Yes, my grandma’s friend’s son, he was sixteen. They did shoot him through his head. And there’s a girl who did lose her brother and her father in the same night.” - Nicole

“When my aunt died, when I was small, it was my mom’s sister. They stabbed her at a club. It was very sad for me because we had a good relationship with each other. I didn’t believe that my aunty was really dead. Everyday I was looking for her. For me it felt like she was still there with me, I could still see her face and her love is still with me and in the house where she lived.... Still thinking about her, some nights I’m crying still, it’s not easy... and she died in such a bad way, we don’t even know who killed her and why they did it. It’s hard for my family.” - Jasmin

Jared describes survival techniques to avoid being victimized:

“At the corner there was this guy, and I was walking with this bag full of things, but what saved me is that I had a piece of gatzby (sandwich) in there. And so I told him I don’t have any money, but I was quick and I told him ‘Ja, but I do have a gatzby for you? And so he said ‘Ok brother and took the gatzby and walked on. But he had a knife. They say it’s better to give something to someone who’s trying to rob you, better than not giving them anything because they’ll just take it and then they will murder you or injure you anyway.” - Jared

Participants indicated that the continuous threat of gang violence restricts the free movement of the inhabitants of Hanover Park and that they resent these limitations. They describe not being able to walk in certain areas for fear of gang shootings, and being very careful about who they talk to or walk with in case they are seen by gangsters and taken for sympathizers with rival gangs. The conventional activities of teenagers such as going shopping, attending youth activities and travelling to school are often restricted for the participants.

“It’s who you know, where you normally walk, who you walk with, who you greet, what you do, everything means something. It’s very risky, especially now.” - Jody

"But there’s been a lot of murders of innocent teenagers just because they live in a certain area, the gangs classify them as living there so they must be in that rival gang.” - Abdul

“I can get dead any minute...and I can’t move freely because I’m a gangster, they just gonna shoot me like a dog and go away” - Adrian

“I don’t feel good about it because of the gangsterism, we can’t even walk, do shopping, go to friends, be free to walk where we want. We must just be in the house, even though it’s holidays we can’t go anywhere.... it’s not right....we wanted to come to the church here for Victory Outreach tonight but we can’t come because of them shooting. And we can’t do anything about it, it’s what their plans are.” - Jasmin

“The final matric exams is coming up, and you don’t know what time they’re gonna shoot. Because you need to get up in the morning and walk to school. And if I write in an afternoon session, I don’t know if they gonna shoot when I walk back around five. I don’t feel good, mainly I’m afraid, ‘cos I don’t know what might happen if I’m on my way to school or back home.” - Jason

Many children play on the streets in the community and are exposed to older people and want to copy what they are doing. Moegamat describes the way younger children are drawn into the gang culture:

“There’s also young children walking with knives now, twelve, thirteen, eleven and they are walking with the biggest gangs. And they shoot guns also now. And people like me, eighteen, nineteen, they’re real gangsters now, walking with guns. They mess their lives over. The biggest gangs get friends with the small gangs and they protect them and they get closer and closer and the young person follow the bigger gangs.” – Moegamat

Exposure to gangs and gang violence, and having to manage the threat posed by gang activities, appears to be a ubiquitous part of daily life for all the participants.

4.1.2 Substance abuse

The participants reported that many people in Hanover Park abuse alcohol and substances and this causes negative consequences for themselves, their families and the rest of the community:

“Most of the parents in Hanover Park they drink a lot, and it’s in their genetics, it’s in their blood, when it comes from the father, most of the time it’s passed down to the child. It’s like wine is in their system and when they get older they just drink and drink.” - Carrey

“I see everyday where they put the drugs away so the police cannot get it. They put it inside the bush over the road. Lots of people work for the merchants, they hide the drugs for them. I know a lot of merchants, they’re Rastas. They sell drugs out of a letterbox, someone stands there and they take it out if someone buys it.” - Moegamat

Six of the participants have a family member or members who are abusing drugs or alcohol. Jared, Rizia and Tyron’s sisters, Jasmin and Daniel’s brothers and Nicole’s father are drug addicts and both Jody’s parents are alcoholics.

“Drugs is so bad because it breaks down the families, it isn’t easy for others to see, if you live in a house with an addict you will see how it really is.” - Jasmin

“No, that’s (drugs) not for me. I see what it’s done to my sister...she in Lentegeur.” - Tyron

Every participant mentioned their concern about younger children in the community being negatively affected by the widespread violence and substance abuse. Ameera and Faranaaz feel like the younger children lose their innocence by witnessing destructive adult behavior:

“They start so young getting involved, like some of the things the very young boys say. It’s stuff I would have known nothing about when I was their age. At four, five years old, I didn’t know about sex then or these drugs? A small child can tell you that. They can talk about it like it’s a normal topic that you talk about every day. And I just look at them and I feel ashamed. It’s so bad for them.” - Faranaaz

“Every day there’s people come to buy slowboats (dagga). They stand sommer there in the park and young children see what they do. There is not an example for them. They also want to try that drugs.” – Moegamat

Every participant indicated their knowledge of the widespread abuse of alcohol and drugs, emphasizing the extent of the influence of this risk behaviour in their community.

4.1.3 Absentee and abusive fathers

Fifteen of the participants describe difficulties in their relationships with their fathers. These difficulties include completely absent fathers, abusive fathers, fathers who have been jailed, fathers who rarely see their children as they have left to start new families and fathers who behave in an uncommunicative, disinterested manner towards their children. Eleven of the youth live with their mothers only. Three of the youth volunteered information about domestic violence:

“My father is a total nightmare... he’s a dragon in human skin... my father hitted me and kicked me, I was bleeding, I had bruises all over my body and I used to wear long-sleeved shirts... he used to hit us with wires and the bars that you put in the roof and he used to hit the broomstick over my back broken... he always shouts at a person and swears and yesterday he called me a vark and a gemors.. I’m a pig and a piece of dirt...my life at home is total dirt... at home I just feel like going away and never coming back...My father, he made a bad impact on my life. And I know that if I had a better father I would have a better life.” - Ameera

“My daddy lit the house on fire with my mommy and my daddy and my brother in it. So he actually wanted to kill them with him. And my mommy and my brother had first degree burns. On their faces and on their bodies. Only my daddy’s feet was burned. Cos he locked himself in the room. So my mommy was in hospital for a month and a half and that was the time of exams. And I was like, if I’m not going to pass now, I’m not going to make it for matric. And so my daddy went to jail.” - Tracy

“My daddy hit my mother and I see what he do and I cry and I cry.” - Moegamat

Antonio never knew his father who left his mother when he was a baby, Abdul’s father was a gangster who was jailed for eight years and came out when Abdul was 16, Abdul feels like he

doesn't know him at all. Carrey's father had an affair and left the family. Nicole attributes her lack of relationship with her father to the effect of his drug habit:

"He's on drugs, he's in his own world."- Nicole

Aashieqah can't communicate properly with her father:

"My father is very silent, he's the kind of manly man, he doesn't talk, he doesn't cry, he just gives instructions. And so I didn't deal well with that, because I love talking... I just wanted a father I could talk to, who would praise what I do, give advice, someone to listen to." -

Aashieqah

Although not every participant reported the lack of a supportive father in their life, each one mentioned that the lack of responsible, caring fathers is a significant problem for most families in the community. The participants who did talk about a negative or non-existent relationship with their father, spoke about this situation as one of their most difficult personal challenges.

4.1.4 Poverty

A final, but less prominent, form of adversity reported by the participants is poverty. This was noted with regard to food insecurity, limited resources for travelling to school and for school fees and for clothes and personal necessities:

"My aunty, she buy porridge for her children, my mother don't have money for that. My aunty buy food but sometime she struggles. Every Wednesday and Thursday there's no food and my grandma must go ask her children for money or food." - Moegamat

"I used to travel to school and then walk back to Manenberg so it was risky for me at that age, for me that was the worst part. I was eleven...I didn't have money to travel back, they only gave me money for halfway. I use to look for my own way to get back. I took me about three or four hours to walk home." - Jody

Fifteen of the participants did not mention financial struggles, although they are from the same low income bracket as most Hanover Park residents. Perhaps the reason for this is that financial struggles are so common in this community that they felt it did not merit talking about or maybe that there were so many other more pressing issues to speak about; it is

possible that poverty was not perceived as a negative or dysfunctional aspect of life in Hanover Park in the way that violence, substance abuse and absent or abusive fathers were.

Therefore, from these narratives of adversity, it is clear that the participants are not an unusually protected or fortunate group of young people living in an area of multiple adversity. They have experienced their share of traumatic experiences and hardships, however they stand out from the majority of teenagers in the community as they resist the high-risk behaviour so common amongst the residents, and also have dedicated much of their energies to trying to improve life in the community by joining the CASE development programme. The section which follows describes the main findings of the study; the factors in the life narratives of these twenty young people which have contributed to the development of a resilient attitude and behaviour and to a strong altruistic perspective in their lives so far.

4.2 Thriving Despite Adversity: Resilience Factors

“We saw how life was going in Hanover Park and none of us wanted that life for ourselves.”

- Rizia

A number of common themes regarding internal characteristics emerged from the participants' life narratives. The common internal characteristics of the participants were that: they value their education and put much effort into achieving academically; they are observant, seeing the consequences of the choices of others around them and using this insight to choose more beneficial paths for themselves; they are positive and hopeful and plan for the future, practicing delayed gratification; they have agency in their lives, knowing that it is up to them and that their choices that will determine their futures; they are determined to succeed at their goals, vowing to work hard and not to give up trying to better their situations; they are caring towards others, particularly the younger children of the community, wanting to help them to make beneficial choices and protect them from the negative influences of the area; and they care about their community and want to shake off the negative reputation that they believe Hanover Park has. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

4.2.1 Academic achievers

Sixteen of the youth (nine of the girls and seven of the boys) describe performing well academically and putting effort into and valuing their education. For example, when talking about her motivations for working hard at school, Ashieqah describes herself as coming from a family of people who achieved good results at school and were well behaved; this was the family norm and it encouraged her to behave in the same way:

“We had a legacy of always being top achievers, always succeeding, always being seen as you know, the perfect student. We always behaved, never stepping out of line, perfect school attendance.” - Aashieqah

“I excelled in my schoolwork, I got top achiever for the year.” - Faranaaz

“I was always outstanding in work, and if the teacher asked something I would always be the one to answer... I never used to fail anything. But there was once, I think it was in grade ten or something, when I failed the first term. And it was a wake up call!” – Abdul

“I helped myself by reading a lot at school.” - Jody

This common attitude of the participants valuing their education and working hard to achieve academic success echoes the local (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ebersöhn, & Maree, 2006; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008) and international literature (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Masten, 2001; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Masten & Wright, 2010) which has identified a link between children who value and achieve academic success and resilient outcomes.

The literature has found that intelligent children are better able to control their impulses and therefore delay immediate gratification of their desires and they may therefore be better able to behave in a manner that benefits their future goals (Hauser, Vieyra, Jacob & Wertlieb, 1985; Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Masten, 2001; Masten & Obradovic, 2006). This may be the case with the participants, who are able to hope for a better future and plan for it by modifying their behaviour.

Perhaps achieving success in school increases the participants' self-esteem and their motivation to put more effort into achieving other goals which, in turn, creates hope in them for a future where their situation is improved.

4.2.2 Insight

One of the most common themes in the participants' life narratives was an awareness of the harmful choices that the participants saw others in the community making, and observing the harmful consequences of these choices. They spoke about seeing the influence of drug-taking on the lives of other community members, dropping out of school, being involved in gangs and absent fathers. They talked about learning from others' mistakes and wanting to avoid these consequences themselves. Nine of the girls and seven of the boys gave examples of this kind of observation, and consequent decisions that they had taken in their own lives.

"We saw how life was going in Hanover Park and none of us wanted that life for ourselves." – Rizia

"Just because you come from Hanover Park doesn't mean you have to be Hanover Park" - Faranaaz

"I used to see people walk past and I know they are on drugs and I could see how they struggle, and ... I didn't want that for myself. So I just look at other people who not on drugs, how their lives are, how do they keep them busy, and I just thought about my life one day....I thought a lot about what is going to be right for me when I grow up, and specifically not to be like my father because he was the alcoholic, not to be like my mother either....I did tell myself I'm not going to go into that stuff because I've seen how the people act." - Jody

"With all the violence and the problems in the community, I just look at the person next to me and I take the easy way out, I don't go where he has gone wrong. I will take the other path." - Adrian

"Most of my cousins were much older so I spend lots of time with them. And when we spoke they used to tell me their life stories, things that happened to them, and I think, for me, those were my experiences and I don't want to experience those things, I want to learn from their mistakes... some of them are on drugs, one is pushing drugs, some are pregnant and some got their matric and threw it away. They don't respect their parents, basically my cousins just threw away their lives and I don't want to do that." – Faranaaz

Therefore, the participants demonstrate intelligence, insight and observational skills when they spoke about understanding the cycle of poverty and violence in the community. They also appear to have a mature self-understanding and are able to reflect on their experiences. Antonovsky (1979) explains that children with a mature self-understanding often demonstrate

an ability to view their surroundings with a “sense of coherence” (Antonovsky, 1979, 32); they are able to reflect on their experiences and integrate these into their self-concept and understanding of the world around them. This capacity for observation and insight is similar to the findings in the study by Smokowski and colleagues (1999) where the participants identified as resilient in situations of chronic violence explained how they had learned from other peoples’ behaviour as well as being able to look back on their past experiences of overcoming adversity and use these to cope with current difficulties. The participants in the current study are able to make meaning out of their experiences and observations in the community, they seek to understand what happens and why it happens. Then they make choices for themselves based on these understandings.

This insightful thinking style may give the youth hope that they will learn from others’ choices and make beneficial decisions for themselves, which will lead to a much improved life than the lives of others in the community.

4.2.3 Hope

Fourteen of the participants (seven of the girls and seven boys) describe having a positive, optimistic attitude, including how they view themselves, how they see their situations and how they view their futures. They look for a hopeful element in the challenges that they face.

“Always think positive, I’m a positive person.” - Sherezahn

“I motivate myself and I’m a positive person, I always look on the bright side “ - Jody

“After each terrifying moment, there’s always a light that shines, because I know that there is a light that’s going to shine in my life. Never give up. Read my book one day, because it’s going to inspire you.”—Ameera

“I always say, things are not as bleak as they seem, people can change their situation. It could turn out to be something good.” - Aashieqah

“Reaching my Mount Everest, there are still many obstacles and challenges and there’s still a long stretch, but I’m strong for it. Life has taught me a lot and I think I can get to the top of my mountain.... Not to take a challenge as a threat, but to take a challenge as an opportunity - Faizel

“I want to teach them that no matter how your... your situation at home, you can still strive to be a better person. You can still strive to accomplish your dreams, goals that you want to do.

Like I didn't come out of a fantastic home, I didn't always get what I wanted, there was always sacrifices. My mommy smoke cigarettes, my daddy drinks and our days at home wasn't so perfect, but at the end of the day it's what you make of it. Like my brother, he took it in a wrong way, where I took it in a positive way, it uplifted me as a person, and it made me only stronger to see that this must not happen in your life and this is just a stepping stone for you. Ja, so no matter what their situation at home and whatever they mustn't always take it in a negative way... take it in a positive way. I believe that God didn't put obstacles in your life that he knows that you cannot overcome.” - Tracy

Antonio uses the metaphor of climbing a wall to explain his view of coping with difficulties in life:

“There isn't a big challenge that I was faced with, it's lots of small challenges that I have to face. But if you get through those challenges, you can get to be a better person.”- Antonio

Hope is defined as “a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful agency, goal-directed energy, and pathways planning to meet goals” (Snyder, Irving, & Anderson, 1991, p. 287). As stated in the literature, being hopeful of a positive outcome to one's situation has been found to be one of the most significant characteristics in children who demonstrate resilient outcomes in local research (Ebersöhn, 2008; Ebersöhn & Maree, 2006; Phasha, 2010; Theron, 2004) as well as in international research (Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004; Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Kumpfer, 1999; Masten, 2001; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Masten & Wright, 2010; Murray, 2010).

4.2.4 Future orientation

Linked with having an attitude of hope, the participants were all able to visualize what hope for their future would look like in practical terms. Goals, dreams and aspirations were readily expressed with excitement and longing in their voices. In the research on resilience, this style of cognition is known as ‘future orientation’. Ameera describes her ambition for her future career and planning to achieve her goal:

“I have goals in the future. Go to UWC to go study for a oral hygienist, oh I can't wait! If I think about my future I get excited! My plan is... I went to UWC and I spoke to this man and he told me that if my grades is good...then I must come back to him and we can speak about bursaries and stuff for a oral hygienist.” –Ameera

For the participants, success in life seems to be equated with having a good job:

“I would like to reach my goals, I would like to be a chef, a chartered accountant or a psychologist and just make a success of my life.” – Carrey

“I want to study education... I’ve enrolled at UWC to do teaching. Because it’s something you enjoy, as well as reading and working with children, that’s why I want to do teaching... but I still want to do chefery part-time, and events management. I don’t know, I want to study more than one thing, I want to broaden my horizons.” Faranaaz

Jason wants to break the chain of an incomplete schooling in his family and avoid dropping out of school as his mother did before him:

“I want to make a success of my career seeing that my mom didn’t make one, she dropped out of school standard nine. And then she got me. So I want to be successful, and I want to be my mom’s first son, first child to matriculate. Then I want to study further and follow my father and become a metro policeman.” - Jason

Jasmin describes wanting to avoid the path of future financial dependence on a male partner and possible related problems by making her own money:

“My future is to finish school first, matric. And then study further, I want to do tourism for my life. And I will put my money away because my mommy told me not to depend on a man for a house, I must be very independent. I must buy my own house, because some women marry a man but it’s his house that he bought but when they have problems she can’t do anything because it’s his house, where is she gonna go if she leave him? He can just throw her out and where can she go? My mom told me that’s the reason I must be independent on myself. That’s why I need to work hard, get a good job and buy my own house, drive my own car, be independent.”- Jasmin

The participants plan and visualize the steps which they believe will lead them to the accomplishment of these goals:

“I definitely think that thinking about the situation that I am in now and where I want to be in the future has helped me, inspired me to make plans.” - Jared

These findings compare to the results of the study by Theron and colleagues (2012) on resilient Basotho youth. The researchers call the Basotho youth who have a positive future orientation ‘dreamers:’ they were future orientated, had “day dreams of how their life would become... dreams meant hope for the future, and hope meant success (Theron, Theron &

Malindi, 2012, p. 74). Like the Basotho youth, the participants in the current study could certainly be described as ‘dreamers’ (Theron, 2012, p. 74), who dream of positive experiences for their futures. In their plans for the future, careers were not the only accomplishments the youth dreamed of; having families of their own was a goal too:

“I would want to have a family, get married, have a few kids and start my own business with the skills I’m going to obtain in the future. There was an apprenticeship for diesel, motor mechanics and I’m going to apply for that. And in the next two years I will be qualified.” - Abdul

Thinking ahead involves the attitude of delayed gratification of immediate desires. For some of the girls, this meant avoiding being distracted from schoolwork by boyfriends or unplanned pregnancies. Sherezahn and Tracy describe their decisions to put their education first so that when they do become sexually active they will be in a better position to take care of a child:

“It’s not worth it having a child now, you’ve got a lot of responsibility, you can’t finish school... now your mother must look after the child and she’s got too much work. What about money? It’s better to wait.” –Sherezahn

“Last year I went out with this boy for awhile...and then I broke up with him, cos I thought to myself, look here, this is my year, and I must focus on my schoolwork more and I can’t worry about boyfriends, pleasing him and making time for him. So I told him maybe one day in the future if we meet again, and I’m more settled and I know I’m more independent on myself then we can carry on.” - Tracy

Ten of the participants spoke about seeing the lack of future orientation in others. Faranaaz explains that she believes that other girls can’t envision the first step towards changing their circumstance:

“These girls don’t see themselves so far in life because they see no beginning of that life” - Faranaaz

The participants see that many others in the community do not envision a life for themselves where they may achieve qualifications that their parents were not able to and which may lead them to afford a better quality of life. Even if others do have future goals, they are often discouraged from trying to pursue goals by obstacles in their paths. The participants feel that these others do not plan carefully for their goals:

“Some teenagers don’t have a certain goal that they want to achieve in their life or a dream because they never thought that they could have achieved one even if they had on. People think there’s no point in thinking that you will achieve a big goal, their parents never got their dreams. And they don’t use what they have, they’re just here to live every day as it comes.” – Rizia

Aashieqah and Faranaaz are conscious of the lack of future aspirations among the young people in the community and understand this as due to the scarcity of high achieving role models:

“Who am I?, Where do I come from? Where am I going? That’s something we need to focus on big-time. I don’t think people think about that enough here, they just survive from one day to the next....Because of what they see. They feel that what you see is what you get and that’s where I’m going, there’s nothing more.”–Aashieqah

“In Hanover Park, you’ll see, children don’t care, most of them are just in school because they’re like, my parents sent me because I need to finish matric so I can get a job, whatever. It’s sad to see. People’s imaginations here in Hanover Park are very limited, they can’t see ahead to what they might become if they tried.” - Faranaaz

Faranaaz’s frustration by the lack of ambition is expressed in this example:

“This year I established the yearbook for my year at school, and I drew up the questionnaire for the matrics and one of the questions was ‘What is your ambition?’ And one of the girls wrote ‘Get a job.’ She said she had not planned anything, she hadn’t thought about it. And I got so angry at her and I told her to think about it and write something else. They are so confined and restricted to what they see. It’s so normal for everyone to just get work somewhere after school or just stay at home, they don’t think to study further to get a better job.” –Faranaaz

Ameera declares her resistance to the low levels of ambition in the community:

“These girls don’t see themselves so far in life because they see no beginning of that life. They just know, Ag, go to school, finish matric, stay at home, go work in a factory. I don’t want to work in a factory! Oh no!”–Ameera

Frequently in high-violence communities, there is a lack of adults who positively reinforce pro-social behaviour, and a lack of rewards for appropriate behaviour. Combined with lowered future expectations of success based on what others in similar situations have been

able to achieve, this creates a high-risk environment for young people to develop anti-social behaviours (Jarett, Sullivan, & Watkins, 2005). This appears to be the situation in Hanover Park, however the participants have not let themselves be influenced negatively by these norms. The participants have a strong sense of the possibility of a positive, rewarding future and this leads them to visualize and plan for their futures and to construct themselves as different from “the rest.” These plans generally centre on academic success with a view towards attaining a well-paid rewarding career and the economic and personal freedom which comes with such employment.

4.2.5 Determination and self-discipline

Fifteen of the participants (ten girls and five boys) spoke of their determination in reaching their goals. They spoke of a belief in their ability to persevere with their plans, and about not being afraid to work hard, believing that if they have patience and they do not let setbacks deter them, they will achieve their goals.

“I believe failure is a challenge so if I fail, I will try my best next time.” - Antonio

“If you have a strong willpower then you will do what’s on your mind...my aim is to work hard. No matter how much times I have to fail in life. And there is times that there is a bad moment, but I know I’m going to pick it up and I’m going to work on that.” - Ameera

Jason speaks about his pride in his determination to succeed even though he foresees obstacles to the achievement of his goals:

“I’m proud of myself. People try to break me down but I will stand up and tell them you can break me down now but at the end of the day I will still be able to get up even if I have to crawl. Like that song that motivated me ‘Sometimes the rain will fall but the sun will shine again.’ - Jason

Jody gives an example of his attitude of determination with regard to his applying to be accepted into the army:

“I’ve been trying for three years to get into the army, that’s where I really want to go but they haven’t accepted me. I don’t know why. But I won’t give up, I don’t give up easily!” - Jody

Having an attitude of determination to succeed means that the participants do not get discouraged easily by obstacles, they deal with them but never lose sight of their goals. This

is illustrated by Aashieqah's comments that other young people from the community who do have aspirations are often easily discouraged by obstacles they encounter:

"If you listen to people's stories, they say 'my sister had a dream of being a doctor. She got to matric and then she had a baby and that's where her dream ended'. They need to realise that even if you had a baby, you can still look further, even if you don't reach your dream, there's other dreams out there." – Aashieqah

Linked with this attitude of determination is the knowledge that reaching their goals will require hard work. Tracy and Sherezahn value their education and anticipate that their journeys to personal success will be reached through putting hard work into their school studies:

"I think if you want to succeed in life you must start at school you must work hard, to become something one day". - Tracy

"I passed all my subjects and I never failed yet in my life, I told my mommy I don't want to fail, I'd rather work hard to achieve my goals."- Sherezahn

Linked to intelligence, having the ability to practice delayed gratification, be adaptable and to control one's impulses in order to behave in a way that benefits one's future goals has been found to promote resilient outcomes among at-risk children (Hauser, Vieyra, Jacob, & Wertlieb, 1985; Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Masten, 2001; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005).

This focus on goal-setting demonstrated by the participants has been linked in the South African literature to resilient outcomes (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ebersöhn & Maree, 2006; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008; Theron, 2004; 2007). Equally, the finding of participants demonstrating realistic expectations of obstacles is echoed in the local research by Van Rensburg and Barnard (2005) and also in the work of Theron and Malindi (2010) with resilient street children, where they found that the youth who made the healthiest choices for survival purposes regulated their attitudes and adopted an attitude of stoicism. This appears to be similar to what the participants are doing with their attitudes of self-discipline and expectations of hard work and adaptation in the face of many obstacles. They exhibit a realistic view of their futures and anticipate the obstacles with which they may have to cope, however they plan for these experiences by strengthening their resolve. The resilience research has found that cognitively competent, resilient children often demonstrate

perseverance and determination and are able to recall experiences of overcoming past difficulties which fuels their hope and determination to overcome present and future challenges, particularly in situations of chronic violence (Smokowski, Reynolds, & Bezruczko, 1999).

4.2.6 Agency

Related to the themes of hope, future orientation and determination, the theme of agency emerged in eleven of the participants' interviews, six girls and five boys. Agency refers to having belief in one's power to affect change in one's own life and the lives of others, particularly in difficult circumstances (Bray et al., 2010), and is linked to the concept of an internal locus of control. It includes being able to envision a pathway to reach the desired goals (Snyder et al., 1998). Snyder and colleagues (1998) have found that people who have high levels of hope use phrases which demonstrate attitudes of agency such as "I can do this," and "I am not going to be stopped;" these phrases are similar to those used by many of the participants in this study.

Agency was demonstrated in the participants' belief that they had a degree of control over their lives; that they could, and had resolved to, affect change in their situations for the future. Tracy shows this belief through her resistance to blaming her area for the problems which people face in the community:

"It's not the place, it's the people in the place and it's what you make of it....so you can't always blame it like.... there's this one sir at school, and he's always like "You must get out of Hanover Park, it's not a good place." And I'm like, it's not the place, it's the people in the place and it's what you make of it. Like (her youth pastor) grew up in Hanover Park and look at what he's made of himself. He has a beautiful home and a beautiful family, it's what you make out of your situation. So it's like yes I live in Hanover Park...it's not the surroundings, it's what you make of it."

"It's what you decide to do with your future, the future is in your hands." - Adrian

Antonio describes his ambitions for his future and his belief in himself as an agent of his own destiny:

"Dream big hey, reach beyond the stars and only you can make your dream a reality." - Antonio

Carrey describes the importance of girls making their own decisions about their sexual choices without bowing to pressure from boys:

“The girls is too weak to stand up to the boys and stand firm and say no.... you can’t let the boy decide for you what you want to do.” – Carrey

Tracy refuses to be cowered by the gangsters and their threats of violence. She believes that standing her ground, and not relinquishing all power to the gangsters will protect her from them to a certain degree:

“I don’t feel threatened, if you look at me I’m going to look at you back, I don’t care if you’re the biggest gangster, because if you show them that you’re scared of them then they’re going to continue doing that. But if you show them, look here, I’m not afraid of you, no matter what you do, I’m still going to say my say. You must show them that they’re not in control of everything and that you can stand up for yourself. If you show them that you are soft then they’re going to take advantage.” - Tracy

Faizel reveals his belief in the ability of people to be able to change their situations when he describes how he sees people in the community having a victim mentality, not taking responsibility for their situations. He believes in putting effort into finding solutions to problems:

“Here in Hanover Park, the majority is poor coloureds and people always talk that life is hard, we are poor, people don’t have proper schooling, people don’t have proper jobs or achieve things but I think people need to take away that stigma and replace it with positivity. And that is happening I think, like with CASE, with government. And our parents did have a hard life with Apartheid so they kind of have that excuse. But the young people now, I don’t think they can have that excuse anymore, we can finish school, get good marks and maybe get a bursary to study and get a good job. Maybe there’s not that much money, but you can try? But if people don’t try, nothings ever gonna happen.” - Faizel

Aashieqah demonstrates having an attitude of agency when she describes the alternate perspective that being involved in CASE activities gave her:

“There needs to be an alternative, CASE was my alternative.... finding alternatives is so important, whether it’s sport, whether it’s what kids enjoy. Just more opportunities, we need opportunities. We’re not asking for everything, but just an opportunity where we can realise and decide for ourselves that there is another way, we don’t need to be in our situation. That’s why I love the Men’s group, I love the Counselling group, the ‘Women On The Move’,

because we learn from one another. Change starting from ourselves and this infects other people. Seeing change starting helps everyone realise they can change. But we need to realise that we are the only people who can change whatever's happening.” – Aashieqah

The findings of this section reflect the results of the study by Bray and colleagues (2010) which found that being able to make decisions and initiate change mattered to the participants' well-being. The way in which the participants describe making a firm decision regarding their choices and goals suggests that they feel a sense of control over their lives which will support them to overcome any obstacles to their aspirations. This belief in their ability to control what happens to them appears to be empowering for youth, and this leads to self-confidence and a positive self-concept (Brooks, 1994; Darla, 1999; Rak & Patterson, 1996).

The participants in this study demonstrate an internal locus of control, a belief that they have a certain amount of control over the environment, and a belief in their ability to change their situations (Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Kim et al., 1997; Luthar, 1991; Masten & O'Dougherty, 2010; Werner, 2006). These findings reflect the conclusions in the wider South African literature regarding the link between having a high internal locus of control and positive outcomes among youth living in high-violence communities (Ebersöhn, 2007, Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Govender & Killian, 2001; Malindi & Theron, 2010; Mampane, & Bouwer, 2006; Pienaar, Beukes, & Esterhuyse, 2006; Theron, 2004; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005).

4.2.7 Care and empathy for others

The theme of care and concern for helping others was present in the interviews of every one of the twenty participants. This feeling was shown for others in general and for family and friends, but particularly for the younger children in the community.

“I have lots of friends. Because I show them I'm loving and caring.” – Abdul

“If you knock on my door I will always open it for you, really.” - Antonio

Jasmin explains caring for her younger siblings and being someone her friends can rely on for support with a problem:

“When my mom's not there I'm always there for my younger brothers and sisters...I'm very open with them, they like speaking about their personal stuff with me. I don't talk out their

secrets and stuff, they can trust me... I can encourage my friends if they come with a problem.” - Jasmin

Aashieqah, Faizel and Adrian describe having a strong desire to help others in any way they can:

“I had something inside of me that kept telling me you can’t have all this to yourself, you’ve got to share. I used to help others with their schoolwork, putting them before my own work. I used to try and help people wherever I could. Like if you didn’t have a pencil, I would borrow a pencil from someone else for myself so I could give it to you.” - Aashieqah

“I’m a very helpful person, I actually put other people in front of my own needs. For me, they are more important, my things will take maybe five minutes, but theirs will take maybe half an hour. I would rather do their stuff than my own.” - Faizel

“I love to help other people, that’s how I see myself and in the future I will hope to do better than I am. Today I will help more people and to be more friendlier.” - Adrian

Abdul and Jason express their understandings of the importance of community members taking responsibility to care for one another in building up a supportive environment:

“It’s not about money, it’s all about the community, it’s the heart of the community. It’s like, say we lived opposite each other, you have a lettuce in your garden, and I have spinach in my garden, then we can give each other and so the community bonded together. It’s not about money, it’s more the love and sharing for each other.” – Abdul

“Where I will go in life, I will never forget my past. Because sometimes, say a friend is in the same situation as you was then you can help him. If everyone looks out for themselves then there will be no community because they just do their thing, they will break the place down.”
- Jason

These findings resonate with the research by Bray and colleagues (2010), which found that young people who are allowed the opportunity to nurture others as they see fit, believe that they have a purpose and are needed which builds their self-esteem and, in turn, their optimism for a positive future. The findings also echo the literature which indicates that children who have a desire for love, and have empathy with others, are also more likely to recover well from adversity (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ebersöhn, 2008; Ebersöhn & Maree, 2006; Germann, 2005; Theron, 2004).

4.2.8 Religious faith

Fourteen of the participants describe themselves as Christian and five describe themselves as Muslim, while one is agnostic. Of the nineteen, fifteen of the participants described themselves as religious, believing in God and being supported by their faith. The Christian participants describe the church as being a place that they enjoy going to, to hear the sermons and to be with friends. Five are involved in the youth group at their church and explain enjoying their activities such as music, plays and spiritual dancing. The Muslim youth do not mention going to Mosque but talk about the importance of prayer to them. Sherezahn and Faizel describe their belief that people benefit from having the strengthening structure of faith:

“Everyday I read my Bible and I pray, thank you for the lovely day that God have gave us..
.and you can speak to the people about God’s word and that’s nice, people need that”-
Sherezahn

“Just to believe in something, because if you don’t believe in something your path will go wrong. People I know went atheist because nothing in their life made sense and they were like ‘why should I do this? Why does that happen? Because a lot of bad happened to them and nothing good happened to them. So believing in something for me is like, there will always be something there for me, no matter what I do.” - Faizel

Having faith in prayer gives Jasmin confidence in herself:

“I believe in praying every night and when I get up I say thank you for the new day. It really helps, praying, because before I write an exam I pray, and my mom also prays for me because that really help... it really helps me, really to believe in myself.” - Jasmin

Kim’s faith gives her with a way to release emotions and clarify her thoughts:

“...if there was no one to talk to, I could talk to God, sitting quietly and just talking to Him, because it’s sometimes not easy to write things down because someone might find your diary, and if I want to cry I can.” - Kim

For Daniel, church is a space where he can belong and express himself through music:

“I go to church every Sunday. I love my church. They have drums and guitar and keyboards.”- Daniel

Therefore, religion appears to play an important supportive role for the majority of participants. These findings support the South African literature on the role that religious faith may play for young people exposed to chronic community violence, in terms of giving them emotional strength, a place of belonging and social support and moral support to guide their behaviour towards positive outcomes (Barbarin, Richter & DeWet, 2007; Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Germann, 2005; Kruger & Prinsloo 2008; Malindi & Theron, 2010; Pienaar, Beukes & Esterhuysen, 2006; Smukler, 1990). The literature explains that faith may often be connected to self-belief and can be perceived by young people as an extra source of strength. Additionally, interacting with religious adults may allow young people to receive moral guidance (Bray et al., 2010; Pearce, Jones, Schwab-Stone & Ruchkin, 2003; Werner, 2006).

4.3 Social Influences

The second category of themes emerging from the data involved the influences of other people on the participants' attitudes, beliefs and decisions. The analysis revealed common themes of support from the participants' family, friends and mentors in the community which appear to have had significant influence on the course of their lives. These external sources of influence can be divided into three broad groups, namely family adults, non-family adults (such as teachers, religious leaders, CASE mentors) and peers. Every participant speaks about the presence of a caring, supportive adult in his or her life who influenced them in some way. When asked to identify four people who have had the most influence on their lives so far, nineteen of the twenty participants named their mothers as the first person. Nine of the girls and eight of the boys described their mothers as positively influencing their lives. Three of the girls and four of the boys named other family members among the four most influential people. All ten of the girls and five of the boys described gaining significant support from teachers. Eight of the youth named an adult in the community who was neither a family member nor one of their teachers, six participants named mentors in the CASE programme and two of the youth named their church youth pastor as being someone who has inspired and supported them. Sixteen of the youth (eight girls and eight boys) reported a friend among the four most influential people in their lives. Although these social supports are from different spheres of the young peoples' lives, the analysis has linked these categories according to the kind of support found from these different sources.

4.3.1 The importance of family support in general

The participants strongly emphasized their beliefs in the importance of a positive, nurturing family environment for young people and they believe that many of the harmful behaviours common in the community are due to a lack of support and care at home. Faranaaz explains her understanding of how parents scaffold a young person's development.

“It's the groundwork, I think when you grow up your parents teach you certain things and that becomes part of you.” - Faranaaz

Ten of the youth spoke about their belief in the importance of family support for children and backed this up by their experience of the negative impact that domestic problems can have on children's lives, particularly, on their behaviour at school:

“If something's not right in the house then they come to school and act like that at school. If there's something wrong then they come and snap at you and you don't know. Also if their families speak to them and treat them in a good manner then they will be good in school.” - Adrian

Rizia adds to this and explains how parents struggling with substance abuse problems are not always able to guide their children:

“I think it's mostly got to do with the parents. If your parents are not alcoholics, or on the drugs everyday then they can give you a better life, help you with your problems. They can see what is going on in the children's lives and see what is happening to the kids is wrong and they can be there to protect them.” - Rizia

Jody expresses his understanding of the importance of parental guidance to their children:

“If your mother or father did not tell you what is good for you or bad for you , or good for your future, then you can't have a good life.” - Jody

Ameera describes the positive impact of parental encouragement on their children:

“Just for one parent to be there, for someone that's never there in your life to be there, it's like a huge thing. You'll run faster, maybe you'll play better touch rugby? Or maybe you'll try even better in your schoolwork.” - Ameera

Abdul comments that teenage boys he knows have been drawn into the gangs by looking for a place to belong as they lack a warm, accepting family life.

“Most of the teenage boys in gangs, they feel that they are not wanted at their families, I’ve seen this a lot, where they are not accepted with their families and they find comfort with the gangs and if they are hungry, they will provide food for them. So that’s where they feel their family is and if they have to be violent then they will do it without a problem because they are doing it for their family. I think it’s where they feel they fit in. The gang bosses are very smooth in how they work, they know how the youth’s minds work, so the gang bosses make them feel comfortable at their homes and then they ask you to do stuff for them. They expect stuff in return for having a home.” - Abdul

Faizel makes an observation about harmful behavior patterns repeating in families:

“Whatever the children does is a reflection of what the mother does, it’s like a mirror. She sees whatever her mother does and she has to do it as well. If her mother had her when she was sixteen, then it’s ok for her to have a baby that age.” –Faizel

Jared sums up the participants’ feelings about the importance of a loving family environment for a young person’s future:

“Also my family is very good, I think you get a good character from having a good family. Going into something with a sad or angry heart is going to disrupt whatever you gonna do.” - Jared

4.3.2 Adult nurturance

Every participant spoke about the presence of at least one nurturing adult in their lives who encouraged and cared for them. For the vast majority, this adult was their mother. Seventeen out of the twenty participants named their mothers as a source of significant support to them. They report their mothers as providing care, interest and encouragement to strive to accomplish their goals and behave in ways which will promote success in later life. The sources of social support from the different categories of nurturing adults were analyzed to find common themes. The themes found were: material support; consistent, long-term care; interest and encouragement; role modeling strength and agency; carrying the belief that the adolescents could achieve a high degree of success; providing rules and boundaries; counselling them; and spending quality time with them.

Material support

A common theme was the appreciation the participants expressed for adults, usually their mothers, but also other family adults, who had provided material support for them. Sixteen of the participants expressed this.

“Definitely my mother, because she helps me, she gives me the things that I need.” - Jared

“Mostly my mommy, because through everything she was there, and if I needed something she would make sure I got it, she worked so hard to help her children.” - Rizia

Nicole and Moegamat describe their uncles as sources of material support for the necessities of clothing and work and education opportunities:

“If I don’t have clothes or shoes then my uncle will buy, if I stand outside and his van is outside then he will give me money. He’s a good person. He have at his house now a new tracksuit for me for Christmas. He tell me he’s gonna look for some work for me, gonna ask his friends.” - Moegamat

“My uncle said if I pass matric, he’s going to give me money to study further. He always helps me if I need something, like books or clothes.” – Nicole

Interest and encouragement

Adult provision of interest in, and encouragement to, the participants is one of the most significant themes to emerge from the analysis. Each participant mentioned at least one adult who showed a caring interest in them and how they valued this as a supportive influence. These adults showed a personal interest in the children, encouraging them to try hard to accomplish their goals, whether this was success at school or staying out of the gangs, not becoming pregnant nor being abused by boyfriends. Jared describes his mother’s role in his life:

“She’s always there for me. We have our fights here and there but I can always go to her if I need her.” – Jared

For Nicole, it is her grandmother who has been her primary support and she describes how her grandmother demonstrates care for her, guiding her to not let boyfriends treat her badly and to achieve success at school:

“She counsels me and I can talk to her about everything. Say if I have a boyfriend, she says ‘you can have a boyfriend, just stay focused, just go for your goals’. I mustn’t let him put me down or treat me wrong. She was always good to me, she was always interested in me and encouraged me. She’d say you must stay in school and stay focused and do your best. She told me I could do well in school.” - Nicole

Five of the participants named ‘Aunty Eleanor’, the CASE youth co-ordinator, as one of the four, and described the depth and breadth of her interest and care for them:

“Aunty Eleanor was always that support for us leaders, she always encouraged us and helped us when we wanted to do things. And she really knew us, she knew who we dated and she knew our parents and she even knew how we did at school! Ja, Aunty Eleanor, she made me laugh. I really miss her.” Faizel

“Aunty Eleanor. She was a mother and a father figure for me too. She was a lady who really saw potential inside of me, do you remember me on my first leadership camp getting the Best Boy Leader award? I never saw myself as a leader before that...ja, she really inspired me and I went on to win leader award in the second camp and Leader 2008 at the end of the year and it was so amazing because without her and CASE I would never know I had such great potential to be a leader for other young people.” - Antonio

The same sense of interest, encouragement and guidance was found in some teachers:

“She was good to me, she was always interested in me and encouraged me, she’d say you must stay in school and stay focused and do your best. She told me I could do well in school.” - Nicole

“Yes it really helped me because of her, I understand why teachers are so strict in high school, why they are like they are, because they want to help you. They don’t want to shout at you, it’s because they believe in you and what you can do. And I won’t forget her, I still think about her.” – Jasmin

Rizia sees teachers as being uniquely positioned to provide nurturance to the children who may not have a family adult who is able to support them in this way:

“Teachers are important for children living here, they mean a lot to the children, like my teachers helped me.” – Rizia

These findings echo the international literature which links resilient outcomes to the presence of supportive parents who provide physical support as well as love, nurturance and a sense of

safety (Masten, 2001) and who are interested and involved with the child's education (Masten, 2007; Masten & Wright, 2010).

High expectations and belief that they could succeed

The adults in the participants' lives have shown an expectation that the participants are able to achieve high degrees of success, and this belief provides the participants with the motivation to strive to achieve their goals. Eighteen of the participants talk about an adult expressing this belief in a positive future for them. Faizel comes from a family of matriculants and so there is an expectation that he will also pass matric; this belief motivates him to try hard to pass and do well.

"They expected me to get to matric because no-one in my house failed yet so there's pressure on me to get high marks." –Faizel

Carrey's mother kept up a continued expectation of her to achieve high results:

"I was brought up to be... like achieve a lot, reach my highest goals and all that... My mom used to tell me "you can do better" and "I don't want a four or five, I want 7" and that's the highest mark. I would get the best in the class for maths but my mommy would say "no, you can do better, you make silly mistakes"- Carrey

Faranaaz describes both her parents' interest and encouragement in her academic success and her internalization of their expectations:

"I think it comes from both my parents, my dad always was interested in our schoolwork and how we were doing and they'd always tell us that whatever we do it is not for them, it is not to make them happy or proud, it's for our own success and happiness. So I think definitely, a part of why I am who I am was because of my parents and the influence they have. It's the groundwork, I think when you grow up your parents teach you certain things and that becomes part of you."- Farannaz

Jasmin talks about the same expectations from her teacher whose belief in her built up her self-confidence:

"She put pressure on us to get good marks. She didn't give up on us, sometimes we told her we can't do it, it's too heavy, we were struggling with it but she didn't believe we can't do it.

She'd say you can do it, everyone can do it. And we did really believe in that, what she told us. That's why I really got close to her. ...she made us a good person, we didn't go down in life because of what she did. Everyone liked her at Morgensorn because she didn't give up on us." - Jasmin

The literature is in agreement concerning the importance of significant adults' expressed expectations of belief in children's positive outcomes. This is illustrated by Harvey and Jacob's (2005) findings in their study that the strongest predictor of children's academic success was their parents' high expectations, followed by the length of time they had maintained their expectations.

Guidance and boundary setting

Eighteen of the participants described mothers who put effort into creating and enforcing rules and boundaries to help them to be safe and to guide them on to beneficial paths of behaviour. Abdul describes his mother supporting him to do his homework:

"When I came home my mom used to ask me do I have homework? I must finish my homework before I went outside, she'd help me with my homework. So I think it was mostly her guidance, because she guided me well."— Abdul

Jared compares his mother's supervision of him to other children's parents in the community who do not supervise them strictly and allow them to do whatever they want to, which often leads them into risky situations:

"The children, they run around too much, they do naughty stuff, they are influenced too easily by what's around them. Because their household isn't a strong one, it isn't like the way that I would explain my home. Their home would be like the total opposite to what I would be doing inside my house and how my people would be influencing me. Their parents go to work and after school the child comes back from school and the parents are not there so the child can just go play in the street, get up to naughty things, swears and does the wrong thing. And ten o'clock, eleven o'clock, I can still hear them running around the road. So I ask them 'why aren't you at home?' and they say 'Mommy's not there, or Mommy's busy in the house.' Because there's nothing for them to do. At my house I always had to be there, my mother was always there and she wanted us to be in the house." — Jared

Moegamat, Adrian and Faizel describe their mothers teaching them to behave in socially acceptable ways:

“She tells me when I’m doing something wrong that I must correct it.” - Moegamat

“My mammie told me when I go to school I must listen to the teachers and respect them” –
Adrian

“My mother, she showed me the path. Told me right from wrong...she has been strict and it was strict enough to make me the person that I am, not taking nonsense, doing what is right.”
- Faizel

In addition to maternal guidance, Jason describes his teacher guiding him to make beneficial choices and by doing this she made him feel that she cared about his well-being:

“She was always drilling me to do good stuff, always telling me what is right and what is wrong, this friend is right for me, this friend is not right for me....she felt like a mother for me, always trying to guide me the right way, she always had time to listen to me. I think she cared about me. Yes she did, she’s even proud of me now that I’m in matric. I saw her the other day and so she said to me.” – Jason

Jared also talks about a particular teacher who inspired him and gave him advice:

“There was this one sir, he inspired most of us man! He would speak about experiences about himself and it was something that would help you in the future. What he said inspired me... he was like a protection, he would help you and give you advice if you went to him... he talked about general stuff that would give you an advantage. We could see he was trying to help us.” - Jared

Therefore the important adults in the participants’ lives, including mothers and teachers, set boundaries of behaviour for them, and have guided them to follow pro-social rules of behaviour. This finding echoes the resilience literature which argues that resilient behaviour is promoted by a type of parenting that is authoritative (although not authoritarian) and where the parent has firm control over the child’s life, monitoring the children’s activities outside the home (Howard & Dryden, 1999; Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Masten, 2001; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Masten & Powell, 2003; Salzinger et al., 2006).

Role models for agency, strength and determination

Participants appear to have parental role models that demonstrate and impart qualities of agency, strength and determination. Fourteen participants acknowledged their mothers as

strong women who cope with difficult circumstances, women who are determined to support their families even when their partners had left:

“She was so strong to keep our family together after my daddy left. I’m proud of her.” - Rizia

“My mom because of the things she went through, she was still standing and she still strong, she would still encourage us, she was still there for us, she was the woman and the man in the house, she would be the strongest person that I would look up to.” - Carrey

“She was a father figure and a mother to me. She supported me in everything that I needed, no matter how big or small, she supported me... I don’t know how to thank her really because for nineteen years she was there for me, alone, struggling to win... my sunshine, she was there for me.” - Antonio

“Cos she’s my mommy. She’s always there for me if I need her. Like my daddy was an absent father, he was there but he wasn’t a father and so my mommy was standing in place for my daddy and for herself.” – Tracy

Some of the participants realize consciously how they have been influenced by their parents and how they have modeled themselves on their behaviour. Aashieqah is an example of this where she has witnessed and can appreciate her mother’s courage and her being able to help others and improve her own situation:

“With my mom, she’s shaped me in many ways. Just by watching her I’ve learnt many things. The way she handles situations, the extra mile she went to solve her issues. You know they were preparing for divorce and she wanted to leave, she stayed because of the children. I love her for what she did for my grandmother when my grandmother was extremely ill. She was the caretaker. And in her own family, when her father died, she took care of everyone else. She put her own needs, her own things aside. And now she’s empowering herself in small ways, she won’t ever have that CEO job but she’s improving herself. I see it. Ja, so always being that nurturing person.” - Aashieqah

Jason speaks of his mother teaching him to strive for goals and help others:

“(She would) encourage me to go far and do good for other people.” – Jason

Faizel describes his father being his role model for coping well with hardship:

“Because no matter what life throws at you, no matter how negative, you can turn it around to make a positive. I can see that my dad has done that in his life. There’s been hard times and he’s got through them.” – Faizel

Abdul appears to admire his uncle's ability to calmly assess a situation before acting rather than impulsively act without thought:

"The other person is my uncle, he's like the wise man, just stand back outside the situation, observe and give advice where possible. He's a humble man." – Abdul

Every participant has therefore had at least one adult role model who inspired them and modeled strength and determination in the face of obstacles.

Counsellor and confidant

Seventeen of the participants mentioned the importance in their lives of having a safe space to come with problems, to be heard, contained and counseled. For some this is provided by their mothers:

"My mum. When I'm with her I can speak about everything, I can tell her my problems." – Mujahid

"She was always there, she didn't try to push me away. And she would always say 'Come talk to me I'm your mother' when I have problems, she would always be there. " – Jason

Others have received this from a teacher:

"One of the teachers I really admired because she was always there for us if we had problems. She liked talking to us, she wasn't a proper counsellor but she supported us." – Jasmin

Other participants talked about their youth pastor being an active, significant emotional support:

"He means so much to me, seriously, no matter what I go through. He knows me so well already na? Like if there's a problem at home and I'm laying in bed and crying, I just feel my phone vibrate and there's a message from him, an inspirational message that fits with the problem that I had now and he doesn't know what just happened. ... So he's always there for me I can call him three o'clock in the morning, he'll always be there for me." – Tracy

"My youth pastor is such a great person... you can talk to him about anything." – Kim

"Uncle Steven for being a father figure to me for the last year. I can ask him about anything, maybe I have a relationship problem or family problem I can ask him for advice. " – Jody

“But Yor, she was there for us in happy times and sad moments. We used to go to her house whenever there was a problem and she would never turn us away. She was always there for us and supported us... she really inspired me a lot, she really cared about us. If we were sad we used to come to her office and she’d let us just sit there for hours if we needed to just sit with her.” – Antonio

Therefore the participants appear to receive high levels of social support in different ways from the adults in their lives, particularly from their mothers. These findings reflect international research results regarding the link between positive outcomes and having at least one good relationship with a parent or other adult who provides warmth and sets boundaries for the child (Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004; Howard & Dryden, 1999; Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Bekker, 2000; Masten, 2001; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Masten & Wright, 2010; Masten & Powell, 2003). The results also echo the findings of South African researchers who found that mothers were reported as being a significant source of support for their children (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005). The results also support the findings by Theron and colleagues (2012), who found that parents, particularly mothers and grandmothers, who encouraged their children to work towards a better future for themselves were mentioned as being a significant source of support for the children.

The findings do not appear to lend support to the belief that family support plays a limited buffering role against the negative mental health and behavioural effects of exposure to community violence, as found in some studies (Govender & Killian, 2001; Shields, Nadasen, & Pierce, 2008; Van der Merwe, 2001; Ward et al., 2007), nor to the theory that family support is less effective in older adolescents to whom school and peer support are more important (O’Donnell et al., 2002; Van der Merwe, 2001).

The findings disagree with some local research which has found that teachers are not able to provide “emotional containment” and sufficient and consistent encouragement for their learners due to stressful teaching environments (Burton, 2008; Meree & Cherian, 2004; Ward et al., 2009). Rather, the findings agree with the majority of research which indicates that teachers can provide a significant source of support for youth in disadvantaged communities by encouraging and caring about them which gives them confidence and a belief in a positive future (Barbarin, Richter, & De Wet, 2000; Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ebersöhn, 2007, 2008; Govender & Kilian, 2001; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; Phasha, 2010; Theron, 2007; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005; Ward et al., 2007).

4.3.3 Peer support

Friends are also very important to the participants in terms of their encouragement of each other and the enjoyment and positivity that they bring to each other's lives. Every participant mentioned a friend or a number of friends as a very important source of support to them.

Antonio describes his understanding of the positive influence of friends with the metaphor of faces in a mirror, as friends reflect optimism and energy into one's life:

"The world... is like a mirror, it reflects on what you do, if you face it smiling it will smile right back to you, but it helps if you have smiling friends around you" – Antonio

The participants' friends are there to provide emotional support to each other through difficult times:

"My friends are very important to me. They were there for me, whenever I needed them. At the bad moments, like when I found out my mom have cancer. They were there for me. And I can't thank them enough." - Antonio

"We love each other and we're close" – Carrey

"I don't know what would happen to me if I didn't have my friends." - Jared

Participants indicated that their friends put pressure on each other to avoid risky situations and behave in pro-social ways. Rizia explains how her friends helped her to avoid the risk of teenage pregnancy by making the norm for their social group to focus on schoolwork rather than boyfriends:

"I never had that friends who wanted to have sex or were thinking about having sex because our main priority was our schoolwork and passing our grade every year. And our parents wanted the best for us, and so did we. We saw how life was going in Hanover Park and none of us wanted that life for ourselves." – Rizia

Moegamat talks about a relationship of reciprocal support and names a few examples of how his friends support each other to make beneficial decisions:

"When I'm in a situation, they always support me and I support them. We encourage each other to go to school and do our work and listen when our mummies' are speaking." – Moegamat

Nicole describes her friend who encouraged her to go back to school and try again to pass after a setback:

“She’s always there for me. Like when I failed, she said to me that I must go back to school, she put pressure on me to go back, cos she had faith in me, I can do it.” – Nicole

The participants’ close friends also often play the role of counselor and confidant, providing a safe space where the youth can be heard and advised about their problems. Jasmin describes how she values a trustworthy girlfriend and how important supportive female friends are in a young girl’s life:

“I can tell her anything and she listens and gives me advice. You must have good friends because boyfriends will come and go but you will always have your old friends.” –Jasmin

Rizia compares the closeness she has with a friend to that between sisters where her friend will give her good advice at the risk of earning her displeasure:

“She’s like a sister to me, she can relate to stuff that I’ve gone through and that. I can tell her anything and she won’t tell people and she would say this is what she thinks, even if I don’t want to hear it she will say it because she knows I need to hear it.” – Rizia

The participants also speak about the positive impact which the other Youth-in-Action members have had on them:

“When I heard my friends were in a fight and I wanted to go find out what happened, she tell me ‘no, this is not for you, stay here, don’t go’” - Daniel

“She also encourages me, she’s changed my life. She made me a better person, tells me not to fight and I listen to her. Before I was violent, always getting angry quick and arguing with everybody... I would stick my mouth in without asking questions.... but I wanted to be more like her, like a good person, cares for other people.” - Jason

Therefore, the participants emphasise the positive effects that their pro-social friendships have on their lives. They also acknowledge the influence of peers involved in high risk behaviours and how they consciously avoid associating with these friends. This finding supports the international literature that has identified pro-social friends as a significant protective factor against anti-social behaviours, such as delinquency, for children living in

high-violence communities (Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004; Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Luthar, Cicchetti & Bekker, 2000; Masten, 2001; Masten & Wright, 2010). It also echoes the South African literature which concludes that pro-social peer pressure is significantly protective for resilient outcomes for youth at risk to develop psychological and behavioural problems (Barbarin, Richter & De Wet, 2000; Germann, 2005; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008; Malindi & Theron, 2010; Pillay & Nesengani, 2006; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005).

Having explored the individual characteristics and experiences of social support that emerged from the participants' life narratives, the next section will describe the pathways that led participants to decide to join a youth leadership programme.

4.4 Pathways to and Motivations for Joining CASE

The participants' life narratives revealed three common pathways to becoming a member of the CASE organization. Four of the participants were gang members who reached a crisis point and decided to leave the gangs to join the CASE Youth programme. Five of the participants were leaders at their schools and joined the programme through their involvement in student leadership councils. The other twelve participants were encouraged by friends who were part of the CASE Youth, by family members and by CASE mentors to become involved.

4.4.1 Crisis point of the former gang members

Four of the boys (Daniel, Tyron Jason and Moegamat) had been gang members but had reached a point where they did not want to be part of the gang lifestyle anymore, with its restrictions on their freedom, its risk of violence, and its negative impact on the community. They decided to join CASE to help them to stay on a path of positive behaviour.

Moegamat describes his life as a gangster and then the turning point for him:

“I was a gangster, I was a terrible WetCat. And I fight a lot, and I leave school....in the courts (block of flats) there is gangsters and I see... and I want to follow them. When I was a gangster I did walk whole day round with a knife... One day my gang did fight and I saw what happened to one of my gang members and my eyes did go open and I see this is not right.” - Moegamat

Moegamat describes the impact of his friend Daniel's influence on him to leave the gang life:

“I was two years with the gangsters and Daniel come and he saved me.” –Moegamat

Daniel had friends in gangs who have been murdered, which eventually made him decide to leave the gangs:

“No they are throwing stones to hurt you and stabbing people with knives...they fight other gangs....I don’t want to be another gangster, there’s too many gangsters here in Hanover Park. And they are dying quick, I don’t want to die so quick.” - Daniel

Daniel describes encouraging fellow gang member Moegamat to leave the gang:

“It helped my friend Moegamat, we were in one gang. I told him this is not working, cos we can’t walk that side and they can’t walk this side, we’re not free to go where we want. I want to walk where I want to walk. If I go to the other side they will stab me. Killing’s fun for them. So I told Moegamat, come let’s go join CASE.” – Daniel

Tyron was badly injured by his involvement in a gang and this helped him to choose to leave:

“Two years ago, this boy he stabbed me here in my back. I was for nearly a month in hospital.” - Tyron

Jason explains his shift in attitude when he realized that his gang was not uplifting the community and he changed his involvement to join pro-social activities:

“I am going on a different path. Once in grade nine, I had my own gang, the DFB boys, Dem Franchise Boys. But after I got to grade ten I decided this isn’t for me. Because if I’m going to have a gang, I should have a gang that is good for the community and must be an example for the children. Not being an example in a bad way. That is why I changed myself, starting to go to church and playing with the kids, having fun with the kids. ...The girl that I met, in my life. When I started at CASE we decided we both gonna make a change. And that’s why we still here at CASE.” – Jason

Daniel describes his frustration with friends’ continued involvement in gangsterism, and compares it to his new passion for community work:

“My old friends, they are still gangsters today, and they don’t want to open their eyes, really. They’re still on that path man, that’s the sad thing. But I stopped that life and started with CASE and my work in the community. I just started a group called BFF, Bonding Family and Friends, and young people are in that group and we doing this counselling thing, being open with each other, talk to each other, this is your moment where you can talk the truth with us!”
- Daniel

These narratives demonstrate aspects of the insight, agency and future orientation that have already been identified as common individual characteristics in this sample. These aspects are illustrated by the participants' insight into the possible harmful consequences of involvement in gangsterism for their futures and the community, and they demonstrate agency by taking steps to leave the gangs and join CASE. Studies have found that ending gang membership is often a difficult process. Leaving a gang to join a pro-social community upliftment organization like CASE may be even more difficult as the two activities are so different in nature. The ability to conceive of this change in association as well as carrying it out, indicates the presence of a strong sense of personal agency.

4.4.2 Natural progress of pro-social participants

Five of the participants (Aashieqah, Kim, Faranaaz, Abdul and Jared) have always followed a path of positive behaviour, by avoiding any association with gangs, doing well academically and holding leadership positions including being prefects and being on student representative councils. These participants were encouraged to join CASE by teachers who knew that they would enjoy the programme and that it would improve their leadership skills, or through their own desire to learn skills and access opportunities which CASE may be able to offer them:

“I was always the bright student, they used to choose me for more responsible roles like prefect.” - Abdul

“I was on the RCL and all the RCL members were invited.” –Faranaaz

4.4.3 Encouragement of others to join CASE

The remaining eleven of the participants describe being influenced by their friends, relatives and mentors to join CASE. One girl whose grandmother is a CASE counsellor encouraged her to become involved. Another has a sister who is a CASE counselor and she encouraged her to join the Youth-in-Action group to make friends. Some had friends who described enjoying the benefits of being in the programme and encouraged them to join as well.

Faizel's mother works as one of the counsellors at CASE, and he described her influence on his desire to help the community:

“She always did whatever she could for other people in the community so that’s why I work now in the community. She showed me that we all need to work together and do something to help make it a better place.” –Faizel

Jared and Moegamat got involved through the influence of friends already in the programme:

“I got involved through Adrian, I saw his attitude, he was so different, he would tell me about what he did with the kids and he would inspire me, I thought that was definitely something good to do.” - Jared

“I had old CASE friends and they said it’s so lekker and they say if you go on the camp then you gonna feel you want to stay at CASE.” - Moegamat

Participants’ motivations for joining CASE, which emerged from their life narratives, have been grouped into five categories. However, rather than stating a single reason for joining the programme, participants often gave a variety of reasons. The five categories of motivations will be discussed below:

Seven of the participants were encouraged by their teachers to take advantage of the learning opportunities offered by involvement in CASE, particularly the leadership skills:

“The Afrikaans teacher, Mrs Lottering, she also likes me, she put my name down for Prefect at school. So she said I must go for the leadership skills camp that CASE is offering.”- Jason

“I am on the SRC and I wanted to improve my leadership skills so I joined” - Kim

Ten of the participants were motivated to join the organization as they wanted to help to improve life in the community, particularly by helping younger children in the community make beneficial choices:

“The youth coordinator spoke to us, showed us the video of CASE and told us what they have achieved and what their goals are and how they saw us being part of the circle.... I saw myself as being part of this ongoing cycle where if I help you I expect you to help someone else. Gaining for myself but sharing with the rest of the community.”–Aashieqah

“I really just want to help take that mindset of children going to gangsterism and stuff which is going to hurt them and will be unproductive for our community...to change the kids so they don’t do the same thing as their parents.” – Jared

“I got involved through Abdul, I saw his attitude, he was so different, he would tell me about what he did with the kids and he would inspire me, I thought that was definitely something good to do.” – Jared

“I saw how CASE is trying to help the kids in the community to have better dreams and so I wanted to help with that.” – Kim

Another theme mentioned by five participants in motivating them to join CASE was the benefit of learning new skills and improving existing talents. Some of the skills related to improving their employability one day or improving their skills in working with others:

“My mom always says be greedy, grab every opportunity, so I saw CASE as my window to that, and whatever they offer I’ll grab it even if they don’t offer it I will ask for it.” – Aashieqah

“For the stuff you learn at CASE and to put on my CV” – Jody

“I see what they learn us, and I see that you mustn’t get easy anger, you must talk with that person first.” - Moegamat

“I wanted to learn what I can do for myself and what potential and abilities I have for helping others and working as a team.” –Rizia

Three of the participants reported that one of their main reasons for joining CASE was to avoid risk situations at home or on the streets in the community in their free-time. This also demonstrates insight as they realize that avoiding risk situations and keeping busy in a safe place may reduce their chances of getting hurt or being drawn into harmful situations:

“I joined CASE to get out of the bad habits” and goes on to explain. “This looks like better friends than I have.” – Adrian

“I said I’m gonna come to CASE and that problem at home, I’m not going to be there for that problem. So when I get home, that problem, is going to be over and so it won’t affect me. I’m not going to be there when it happened. Cos it affects you more when you’re there.”– Tracy.

“I joined CASE for the fun of it, to help the kids and to keep me busy.” - Jody

These comments echo studies which have identified unoccupied time after school and on weekends as the highest risk time for exposure to violence and harmful activities amongst youth in low-resourced communities (Ward et al., 2007; Wegner et al., 2006).

In summary, the participants experienced three different pathways toward becoming involved with CASE and offered a number of reasons which motivated them to join CASE initially. The next section explores the reasons the participants gave for their continued involvement in CASE.

4.5 Continued Engagement with CASE

The CASE Youth leadership programme runs recruiting drives for new youth members every year at the high schools in Hanover Park. Many teenagers join the programme and then stop coming to meetings after a few months. However, the participants stand apart as they have been long-standing members of programme for periods of between one and five years. The following section groups their reasons for continued involvement in the organization into three categories. The most common motivation was their involvement with the younger children in the CASE Kids' Club. The participants feel that they are very important in the lives of the younger children, as role models and teachers, and sources of care and support. Another reason for continued involvement was the life skills that the participants have learned through the programme. Finally, they explained that CASE has given them a safe space to grow and develop away from negative influences on the streets or harmful situations at home.

4.5.1 Caring for the small children

The participants explained how much they enjoy teaching the small children, caring for them and giving them a safe place to have fun.

“I ask them how is your mommy and your daddy and I interact with them and get to know them on a personal level. And that is why when they see me around they always say “hello leader.” Cos they know that there’s that point of trust and that sense of belonging...I keep a positive profile, a positive way of speaking to them all the time. I speak to them in a way that I expect people to talk to me also. People who care for me. So they see, Yor! She really sees me, she really cares” - Tracy

“You could just see on the children’s faces when the leaders played with them and sang the songs, that they really cherished it. And afterwards they’d come to hug the leaders when they left. It was always the kids that was the most important thing for me at CASE.” - Faranaaz

“It’s nice to work with the kids because then they know that there are some people who care about them and there are safe places where they can go to.” - Rizia

“That’s why I come to CASE, working with children, I love working with children.” - Jasmin

“We can learn them, and get a better mindset in their minds, of not to do things, and what’s wrong and what’s right.” - Carrey

“In Kid’s Club we do something with the children and speak to them about the struggles in the community and in life. And if there’s a problem, they must speak to someone they can trust. It’s better for them to be in Kid’s Club then on the streets. We must keep them away from the drugs and the gangs, we must care about other people and help them.” - Adrian

The participants know the effect that observing other people’s choices had on them and so they want to, in turn, help the younger children to become better role models for children in the future:

“So I would work on their mindset so they can change into better people so they can inspire other people.” – Faizel

Faizel explains how he wants to encourage the smaller children to work hard at school and therefore to break the cycle of poverty by gaining financial freedom through education:

“Motivate them through their studies, to inspire them that there is a better life for them, then Hanover Park will be a better place.” - Faizel

The participants emphasise the importance of being able to resist negative influence from others, Faizel describes this as teaching the Kids to be “mentally strong”

“We can teach them the right road, because people can influence you if you’re not mentally strong so we try to teach them to be strong.” - Faizel

Adrian explains the importance of providing good teenage role models for the children that the Youth group work with:

“Children must look up to us as good role models, and say ‘I want to be like him someday, I want to be like her.’ Care about other people and help them. In Kid’s Club we... speak to

them about the struggles in the community and in life. And if there's a problem, they must speak to someone they can trust. It's better for them to be in Kid's Club then on the streets. We must keep them away from the drugs and the gangs." – Adrian

Faizel speaks about the negative role models in the community and their effect on children:

"So things that we do like gangsterism, people smoking dagga on the corner which you can see, people drinking, people playing with a knife on the street, gambling. It's not a good way of life, but that's what we grow up seeing. That's what people have done with their life, that's what they see. I don't think children grow up thinking I want to be a drunk or I want to gamble for money but they eventually do those things because that's all they see other people doing." –Faizel

Antonio describes the violence in the community which the children are copying:

"(I) want to... get into the hearts of the young men and tell them, guys you are wasting your life, one day if you have kids, they will be like you, and other children they will also follow you, they are watching you walk around Hanover Park with a gun in your hand. And maybe you drunk, and you just shoot and you don't know who you shoot, you just shooting" - Antonio

The participants also described being conscious of being role models for young people in their families:

"There's a lot of people that views us leaders as role models in the community, something good and if people see us doing the good things that we do in the community, it might give them a different mind-set and help them. Any little bit helps." - Jared

Faranaaz talks about observing her older cousins' harmful choices in abusing drugs and falling pregnant and does not want to provide the same role model for her younger cousins:

"I have younger cousins and I don't want to be that kind of role model for them." - Faranaaz

Ashieqah describes being conscious of being a role model to her sister:

"She's always been the reason why I tried to do certain things, behave in a certain way because I always think to myself, she's going to do the exact same thing..."

"Children must look up to us as good role models, and say 'I want to be like him someday, I want to be like her.'" - Adrian

For Tracy, caring for the children gave her a sense of purpose which seems to give her motivation for the future:

“They look up to you and they see you doing this and that and at the end of the day, they’re going to do this and that also. And I remember, me and my mommy went to Hanover Park, there by the terminus, and a bunch of children came past us. And they were: “Hello Tracy, hello leader!. And I said “Hi” and gave them all a hug, and asked them “how was your week?” And my mommy told me, “Yor! I’m proud of you!” I actually never saw that children can look up to a young girl so, man!”. And just the impact that I have on them. And my mommy said you should have seen their faces lighting up. And I looked at my mommy and tears just came running. You know, like, everything has a purpose in life, everyone has a purpose in life. And I think my purpose in life is working with children. And no matter what I’m gonna do one day, I will still work with children” – Tracy

Becoming a youth facilitator has given Antonio a sense of purpose and confidence:

“Today I can be proud because I am their role model, because they are coming back to me and asking me ‘Antonio, how can I make my dream a reality?....so that really encourage me that they see something in me that I don’t see. I can go on camps as a facilitator and when I speak they listen. And that tells me that they have the utmost respect for me and that feels good, as a young man, I have that respect.” - Antonio

4.5.2 Learning life skills

The youth see the Youth-in-Action programme as a vehicle for them to exercise their agency. Through the organization, they learn skills, opportunities and confidence that they need to become successful.

Jason describes the difference that learning anger management and communication skills has made on his life and the lives of the other Youth members:

“If you used to say something wrong to me I would trip on you and skel with you and get angry. But now I just relax and say ‘no its cool.’ Now I’m laughing a lot lately, I’m being a happy person like it feels like I’m open now, nothing is being kept inside. Not an angry person anymore, being on the wrong side, I’m on the good side now. We can talk to each other, the leaders, at CASE.” – Jason

“CASE is there to keep us busy, to motivate us and to teach us good skills so that we can achieve in the future. Ja, as you go on with CASE and do the camps and the workshops you

learn more of what is your problems and how to deal with it and you trust people more. The more you are with people the more you get to trust them and the more you can share your problems and find out that other people are going through the same thing so you can help each other. Ja, so no matter what you say, people will listen and help you.” –Faizel

“We can use these things in our lives. We can talk to each other if we have problems and give each other advice and help each other make the right choices.” – Adrian

“First we were facilitated and then we co-facilitated and now some of us are facilitators. So there is development in the Youth programme.” – Abdul

“We learned to work as a team over the years and we will always have those skills now.” - Aashieqah

“I think the Youth is going to help me make something of my life.” - Daniel

4.5.3 A place to belong and grow

Five of the participants describe CASE as a safe place to find emotional support:

“I met loads of friends and I actually felt like we were a family. I didn’t need to do anything at CASE to be accepted...I felt like I could just come and relax...just be myself, just talk about everything and nothing and support each other. I got that space to be who I wanted to be. CASE was the place where we came if we didn’t want to be at home, or we felt like doing something together but we didn’t have anywhere to go that was the place we went to.” - Jasmin

“It was all about growth, and finding family where we didn’t have family. A lot of the youth felt like we’ve been abandoned by society and that our parents expect us to be a certain way or not to be like Hanover Park but we didn’t know where we were going. So it was about personal growth and support, always support....It was always a safe space for us, to give us freedom to be ourselves.” - Aashieqah

4.5.4 Avoiding risk situations

A benefit of belonging to the Youth-in-Action programme that some of the participants did not foresee when they first chose to become involved, was the safe space, physically and psychologically, that the programme could offer them. CASE activities keep them from

becoming bored, and keep them away from the negative influences on the streets or at home, allowing them to avoid risky situations.

“There’s nothing for them to do, that’s why I love it when people ask me to do something because there’s something to do with my time, because you’ll sit at home, bored, nothing to do and then something comes to my mind, ‘let me try this.’ But it’s a bad thing, but you’ll still do it. That’s why CASE is a good thing because it gives us things to do to keep busy, meeting on a Monday, exercises on a Tuesday, Wednesday is MADD, Thursday is Karate now and Friday is Kid’s Club and sometimes there’s a hike on Saturdays. So we’re kept busy and learning new things.” - Faizel

“CASE keep me busy and away from that bad route. Yes, it kept me busy, kept me off the streets. I used to go to Youth at 3pm after school and come home at five and then I was tired, so it kept me busy. And the weekend we go on hikes, keeps me motivated.” – Jody.

In summary, the participants were motivated to join CASE as they hoped to achieve a number of goals. These goals included helping the younger children of the community, and having been involved with the programme they now believe that they are effective in helping the children by being positive role models, creating a safe space where they can play and learn and offering containment and guidance for them. Seeing that they have made a positive impact on the children’s lives appears to have given all the participants a sense of confidence and purpose. The participants also wanted to keep themselves busy and avoid boredom and risk situations in the community as well as furthering their leadership skills and learning other life skills which they also believe they have been successful at achieving. Reflecting back on the benefits of their involvement with CASE they see that belonging to the programme gave them a safe place, physically and emotionally to develop and learn and feel supported.

The ability of the participants to recognize the risk in having large amounts of unoccupied time which may lead to exposure to violence may be linked to the individual qualities of intelligence and insight, as well as their strong sense of personal agency in taking steps to avoid exposure to harmful situations. The empathy, and care for others may have influenced their desire to want to work with and help the younger children in the community. Their strong hopeful attitudes and desire to plan well for their futures may have been an influence in them wanting to take the opportunities for learning new skills and having enriching experiences which CASE was offering.

4.5.5 Resistance and community change

When asked about their community in general, the participants were very resistant against the negative perceptions that they believe other people have of Hanover Park. They emphasised their beliefs in personal agency.

“People think because you come from a certain area, you act that way, but I think it shouldn’t be that way. Just because you come from Hanover Park doesn’t mean you have to be Hanover Park.” –Faranaaz

“And society has classified us as being scum of the earth already, where we can’t speak proper English, our grammar is bad, we drink all the time, we lose our front teeth for no reason... they think that’s our culture, but we’re not all like that at all.” –Aashieqah

Faranaaz goes on to describe what she sees as the positive aspects of the residents of Hanover Park:

“Our people have a lot of culture in them, they always say ‘the old people said this and they old people say that’ and they are a very open, close community. Our families are very important to us” - Faranaaz

Aashieqah believes that as violence is so prevalent in the community, young people growing up do not see any alternative ways of solving problems:

“I think as youth, we got the wrong idea of how we should move forward, because everything is about fighting back and war is not the answer. We need to find other ways.”–Aashieqah

Antonio demonstrates the participants’ attitudes of viewing problem situations in an optimistic light:

“This girl from a school in Rondebosch asked me ‘Do you really live in Hanover Park?’ And I told her ‘I’m proud to be living in Hanover Park because we have a lot to do there, but we’re up for the challenge.... we can reach our goals.’”– Antonio

Sherezahn demonstrates the youths’ attitude of seeing where responsibility lies and not having a victim mentality:

“Our community isn’t that well, but its our own people who bring rubbish into our community.”– Sherezahn

For Aashieqah, being able to make use of opportunities is a way out of many of the problems of people in the community.

“I just think they need to see the opportunities. And people often throw their opportunities away, like dropping out of school to have a baby and not coming back.” – Aashieqah

The participants expressed feeling angry and frustrated as they feel that nothing is being done about the problems in the community; they want to see action towards change. Aashieqah and Tracy demonstrate their belief in the community’s power to change the problem situations:

“People here are naïve. They tend to just shutdown from what is happening and be afraid. I hate people who are afraid, I really hate them. Because with all the violence that is happening, why are people just running away? Sheltering themselves in their homes? When we can actually take the bull by the horns and solve the problem. The other issue is the drug abuse. Everyone says education is the key but I don’t think education is the key. I think there’s so much more that you can do. Put things in place, put people in place, like obviously the merchant doesn’t have to be where he is, central so everyone can visit, why not stand against these people? Report them to the police?” –Aashieqah

“People don’t stand up for their rights in Hanover Park. The drug lords is next to them and they’re scared. I just think we need to stand up and tell them, “look here, no! you’re ruining our children’s lives. And like you won’t see one drug lord’s child do drugs, because they know how it affects people, children. Where they sell it to other people’s children. And they use that money and they buy them cars and homes, and I don’t think that is right. I think our community should just stand up and tell them we don’t agree with that. I think if they stand up and they show them we’ve had enough and you’re not going to do it anymore then our community will be much better....because if they don’t...there’s not going to be no good legacy for the future. The cycle is just going to continue in the same way.” - Tracy

Faranaaz brings her determination and aptitude for hard work to her beliefs about community change. She emphasizes team work and realistic expectations in her ideas about what needs to be done in Hanover Park:

“I think people should just come together, but there’s so much hatred in this place, so much anger. The people just somehow need to come to a realisation that it needs to come to an end. People are telling themselves that no-one is doing anything about it. It’s like you need a plan of action, everyone knows that there something needs to be done but no-one can come up with a plan...you need to all want to do it and you need to start small, you can’t come with

this huge life-altering plan and say it's going to happen today! And all of a sudden Hanover Park is going to be this sparkling place, it's not going to happen, it takes time and dedication.”
–Faranaaz

Antonio expresses his belief in his sense of agency, and his desire to model this for others:

“It's up to you to make a good future. You want to become something in life? It's up to you? And then you come back to your people and say I've reached my goal in life, why can't you? And the most important thing is you got to say 'I'm coming from the same background as you, the same bad community as you and today I'm proud of myself because I made something of my life.'” – Antonio

In line with their strong sense of agency, the youth like to focus on practical things that they can do to help the community. Tracy describes practical ways that the youth can improve life in Hanover Park:

“Yes, I think it's not only kid's club that we work with it's other people also. Like we have our literacy group, we work with elder people also. Like the youth went to a home with disabled people, we just went for a day and we just spend the day with them, pushed them in their wheelchairs and so on. So it's not just about CASE at the end of the day, it's your community also, doing something that can help things.” – Tracy

Just like for themselves, the youth envision a better future for their community but they acknowledge that it won't be an easy process:

“But it's hard, people don't want to try something new, they are scared of new things... But what will happen if no one stands up and say we want to make that change in Hanover Park? We don't want to see people walking with guns in Hanover Park, we want to see people walking with suits in Hanover Park. Or someone who used to be a gangster riding in a government car? Or motivating the children as a motivational speaker. That's what we want to see, but it's very hard to get in Hanover Park.” – Antonio

In summary, the participants use their attitudes of optimism and hope and their belief in personal agency to comment on what they perceive to be the challenges facing their community and their ideas for addressing these challenges. Their belief in being able to affect positive change in spite of multiple adversities has contributed to their enduring commitment to the Youth-in-Action programme.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter explored the individual and social factors common in the life narratives of the youth members of the CASE youth programme, which led them to become involved in a community development organisation. Eight individual characteristics were found to emerge for the majority of the participants. These were: academic achievement, insight, hope, agency, determination, future orientation, care, and religiosity. The social factors common to the participants included the presence of a loving, nurturing mother or grandmother, and support from teachers, adult mentors and peers. Together these influences have assisted these young people to demonstrate the resilient behaviours involved in being active, long-standing members of a pro-social youth development programme. In Chapter Five an interpretation is offered which links the presence of the adult role models in the lives of the participants to the eventual development of protective individual attitudes, which include the strong belief in their own power to change their own lives and the lives of others in the community. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research and policy.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to explore resilience factors in the life stories of twenty long-term adolescent members of a community development programme in the high-violence community of Hanover Park in the Western Cape. This chapter will summarise the findings of the current research and their relation to the literature reviewed. It then provides consideration of the limitations of the study followed by recommendations for future research.

5.1 Summary of Research Findings

Following the recommendations of international researchers like Ungar (2007) and Masten (2011) and South African resilience researchers Dails-Brassford (2005) and Theron (2010), this study has attempted to explore the resilience factors that are unique to a particular context and culture in South Africa, and to understand what factors are effective in supporting young people in this setting. The findings have been used to produce a basic model which may be of use in assisting the construction of effective interventions to support young people living in communities experiencing multiple adversity (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ebersöhn, 2007; Germann, 2005; Masten, 2011; Theron & Theron, 2010).

The participants appear to have been influenced by a significant number of protective factors, stemming from multiple sources, from their internal characteristics of resilience, to support from the family, school, peers and community levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Therefore, the relationship occurring between the risk and protective factors in the lives of the participants may be interpreted as a “Protective-Stabilizing” pattern, as it appears that their level of negative psychological symptoms is low and their adjustment is stable despite the presence of high levels of risk factors (Luthar & Cicchetti 2002). Although this was not formally measured, the participants appear to have stable, healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning and clearly demonstrate the capacity for generative experiences and positive emotions (Bonano, 2004).

According to Rutter (1985), resilience “resides, not in the evasion of risk, but in the successful engagement with it... protection stems from the adaptive changes that follow

successful coping” (Rutter, 1985, p. 318). The participants in this study have not evaded risk factors in their narratives, rather they have grown up in a community faced with multiple adversities, among them gang violence, domestic violence, broken families, absentee or abusive fathers, substance abuse, and poverty. However, they do not demonstrate the high-risk behaviours common amongst adolescents in the community, they appear to have successfully engaged with these risk experiences and have developed healthy adaptations to cope with them. They perceive their problems as challenges from which to gain strength and self-belief, to tackle future difficulties successfully. The following resilience factors, common in the participants’ life narratives, appear to have supported them to achieve the positive outcomes they demonstrate.

Eight individual characteristics were identified which are common to the participants’ life narratives. These are: they value education and academic achievement; they are observant and insightful regarding others’ choices in the community and use this insight to help them make beneficial choices for themselves; they have a strong sense of personal agency and an internal locus of control; they have an optimistic, hopeful outlook, a positive orientation towards their futures, and an attitude of determination and self-discipline towards achieving their goals; they have a caring, empathetic attitude towards others; and they draw support from their religious faith. On the whole, these findings regarding the internal characteristics associated with positive outcomes amongst youth in disadvantaged communities are in agreement with the existing South African resilience research (Barbarin, Richter & DeWet, 2001; Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ebersöhn, 2008; Ebersöhn & Maree, 2006; Germann, 2005; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008; Malindi & Theron, 2010; Theron, 2004; Theron, Theron, & Malindi, 2012; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005).

The social experiences common to the life narratives include receiving support from family adults, non-family adults (such as teachers, religious leaders, CASE mentors) and peers. This support was made up of material support, interest and encouragement, high expectations and belief that they could succeed, guidance and boundary setting, role models for strength, determination and agency, and counselling.

As stated in the literature, social support from a person’s family and friends has been found to be one of the most important factors to protect against the negative effects of living in a high-violence community such as Hanover Park. The participants perceive that they have received good quality social support, including both emotional support and material social support

(Ceballo & McLoyd, 2002) from many sources, but particularly from their mothers. The findings echo the situations of many children across the country in that they have absent or unsupportive fathers (Barbarin et al., 2001; Dass-Brailsford, 2005). Despite living in a community facing multiple adversities with its incumbent stresses, the mothers of the participants appear to have been able to provide their children with the support, warmth and nurturance which has been found to be protective against the effects of violence exposure (Howard et al., 2010; Ozer, 2005; McCabe et al., 2005). From their description, participants' mothers are authoritative, but not authoritarian, they are warm and nurturing, they encourage communication, and lay down rules and boundaries regarding the child's activities, creating an atmosphere of safety and predictability for the participant which has been associated with resilient outcomes among children in the international literature (Howard & Dryden, 1999; Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Masten, 2001; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Masten & Powell, 2003) as well as the South African literature (Cluver & Gardner, 2007; Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008; Operio, Cluver, Rees, MacPhail, & Pettifor, 2008; Theron & Malindi, 2012; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005).

However, the findings of the current study differ from the existing literature in that much of the international and local literature states that parental support becomes less effective as adolescents get older. In this study the participants appear to have maintained their reliance on the support of their mothers; very little evidence appears in the narratives regarding a distancing from the support of their mothers. The participants acknowledge support from their teachers and friends to be very important, but it does not appear to have overshadowed the support from their mothers.

The findings of the current study further indicate that, in communities facing multiple adversities like Hanover Park, schools appear to be uniquely situated to offer places of safety and support where children can interact with caring, supportive teachers and pro-social peers and be exposed to opportunities to achieve positive outcomes. This environment may have a protective effect against the negative psychological consequences of contexts of multiple risk. This finding echoes the conclusions of many studies both in international literature (Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Masten, 2001; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Masten, 2007) and in South African research (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ebersöhn, 2007; Ebersöhn, 2008; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; Theron, 2007; Theron, Theron, & Malindi, 2012; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005). This connection to school and valuing of education and pro-social rules of behaviour may have protected the majority of the participants against substance abuse and

conduct problems (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Brookmeyer, Fanti & Henrich, 2006; Comer, 1985; Howard, Johnson, & Dryden, 1999; Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007; Ozer, 2005).

Research has identified that community structures and institutions can be resources which support resilience among children in high-violence communities (Ebersöhn, 2007; Theron, 2007; Theron, Theron, & Malindi, 2012). As the streets of the community sampled in the current study are high risk areas due to gang activities, the social capital (Putman, 2000) of Hanover Park lies in the networks of pro-social organisations such as supportive schools, churches, mosques and community development organisations (including CASE) which facilitate action and teach pro-social values. In previous studies also, these institutions which provide young people with safe spaces, opportunities for building supportive relationships with adults, opportunities for improving their education and skills, as well as spiritual activities and leisure interests, appear to be highly influential in promoting pro-social and protective behaviour for youth in the community (Govender & Killian, 2001; Theron, Theron, & Malindi, 2012; Ward et al., 2007).

The cultural context of the neighbourhood environment holds particular values, beliefs and everyday practices that can assist or impede their coping with adversity (Boyden & Mann, 2005; McCubbin, Thompson, Thompson, & Fromer, 1998; Sonn & Fisher, 1998; Wolkow & Ferguson, 2001). When researching to see whether culture had an influence on the resilience of participants in their study, Theron, Theron and Malindi (2012) discovered the existence of an “Africentric” view of resilience, which referred to a much stronger focus on a collective, community sense of support, kinship ties and spirituality in encouraging positive outcomes for young people in situations of adversity, rather than a Western understanding which relies heavily on support from individuals (Garmezy, 1993; Wright & Maston, 2006). In their study, the researchers mention local community support to include the responsibility of teachers, youth leaders, older community members, as well as positive peer-pressure, for passing on pro-social norms to young people in the community (Theron & Malindi, 2012).

In applying this African understanding of resilience to the results of this study, it appears that the culture and community environment of Hanover Park has played a definite role in the participants’ resilience. The findings indicate that the participants receive significant support from individual family members, particularly their mothers, but there is also a definite presence of community support. The participants’ teachers and CASE mentors are a strong source of support, both on an emotional level as well as from a guidance perspective, by

imparting pro-social norms and advice to them. From a spiritual perspective, participants report receiving significant spiritual support from their religious institutions in their community and there is also evidence of positive peer pressure to avoid high risk behaviour and to act in beneficial ways. Therefore there appears to be an element of community cohesion and collective responsibility in these stories of resilience, indicating the presence of “Africentric” resilience processes working in this group of community children.

Combining the construct of social capital with an Africentric understanding of resilience, the traditional social responsibility of Ubuntu, Perkins and colleagues (2002) explain that social capital also includes the sense of community responsibility that residents share and their willingness to become involved in projects to help solve community problems. According to this understanding, the participants believe that social capital is lacking in this regard. The participants suggest that they feel keenly a lack of enough of a presence of Ubuntu, a lack of community responsibility, amongst the residents, for the problems facing the community. They voiced their frustration about the perceived lack of action being taken to combat the community’s problems of gangsterism, violence, substance abuse and unemployment, and also about the lack of care and responsibility which adults seem to show for children. They believe there is potential for much higher levels of community support to be established and for the social capital to be increased. One of the participants most vocal in expressing this sentiment was Antonio, who talks about the creation of Hanover Park by the destruction of District Six, an area renowned for its sense of community and strong social bonds. Antonio sums up the participants’ desire to reconstruct these bonds again, this sense of Ubuntu in their community:

“When my mommy heard I was starting this group she told me about District Six.... my mommy grew up there and her mommy grew up there as well. And so she told me about what it was like there. Because in District Six people all lived together, and people could walk from one side of District Six to the other side and they were safe! People used to sit on the corners and sing to older people, they cared for each other. District Six was a place of happiness, good memories for a lot of old people. And people who lived in District Six will tell you, people used to bond together, doesn’t matter whether they were Christians, Muslims, Jews whatever, they were bonding together... The White Areas Act and the forced removals, that was basically the main damage that broke the bond between coloured people..... And they used to leave doors open in District Six, you can’t do that here. People really miss that type of life, sitting around a galley, just being themselves. You can’t sit around a galley in Hanover Park, because then people will think you’re a gangster and the police will pick you

up and search you. And that is the saddest thing, getting people out of a place where they were free, where they were happy and they were bonded. It's so different here. And in District Six young men used to respect older people, today young men are just rude to older people. And that makes me feel ashamed about myself, I'm a young man and I'm not like that, I can make a change in Hanover Park? Why can't they? ...And that is what I want to do in Hanover Park, and not only Hanover Park, the whole of Cape Town." - Antonio

Three years after the initial data collection, when the feedback focus group was held, all the youth were either engaged in further study or still working to uplift the community. These participants appear to be doing all they can to increase the social capital of the community of Hanover Park.

Therefore, the participants have received support from a variety of sources, and have developed internal protective qualities. But the question remains, how do these internal and external supportive factors interact and influence each other to promote positive outcomes for the participants?

What follows is an interpretation of the process of resilience in the participants' lives. This interpretation offers a possible explanation of the link between the participants' strong maternal attachment bonds, their internal resilience qualities, and their ability to seek out other nurturing relationships and opportunities, which resulted in the participants being able to avoid the risk behaviour common to adolescents in the community and to engage with the goals of CASE, to result in a long-standing community activist identity.

5.2 An Interpretation of the Resilience Process in the Lives of the Participants

Despite the majority of participants having an unsupportive or absent father, seventeen of the participants appear to have a strong attachment relationship with their mothers. The other three participants have a strong attachment to their grandmothers. The theory of attachment may be valuable in explaining how the participants were influenced by their strong bonds with their primary caregiver to develop their resilient internal qualities and their later protective choices. Early positive bonds with primary caregivers build trust in children and teach them that they are worthy of love (Bowlby, 1982). This builds confidence in them as they have been taught to value themselves and this may support the development of a predisposition to be optimistic and hopeful for their futures. These supportive mothers have

provided the relationship bonds necessary for the children to develop trust in themselves and in others (Bowlby, 1982; Bretherton, 1990). Relationships with mothers who are sensitive and responsive to their children teach them empathy for others and this, in turn, helps children to form positive relationships with others later in their lives (Fonagy & Target, 2003; Schore & Schore, 2008). These strong bonds with their mothers and grandmothers may be one of the main reasons that the participants are able to seek out and build supportive relationships with their teachers and peers, and are able to demonstrate high levels of care and concern towards the younger children in their care and a desire to improve conditions in the community. These findings echo the conclusions of some longitudinal resilience research which has found that children with secure attachment relationships often have higher levels of resilience, independence and social skills (Stroufe, 1983), and higher levels of self-esteem and optimism (Karapetian & Grados, 2005; Kitano, & Lewis, 2005; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten & Powell, 2003; Werner, 1984). This link between supportive parenting, high self-esteem and positive outcomes for children in adverse circumstances is also echoed by South African research (Barbarin et al., 2001; Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ebersöhn, 2008; Ebersöhn & Maree, 2006; Germann, 2005; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008; Operio et al., 2008; Theron, 2004; Theron et al., 2012; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005).

The participants appear as likeable children; they are positive, optimistic, hard-working and empathetic. These qualities would encourage others to want to engage with them and to give them warmth and attention, and these positive responses from others would, in turn, increase their confidence in seeking out close, supportive relationships (Catalano et al., 2002).

Therefore, these results emphasise that children who receive support from others are not simply lucky, but rather have characteristics which elicit a positive reaction from others allowing them to receive more warmth and attention, leading to the development of further supportive relationships.

Bandura's (1977; 1997) social cognitive and self-efficacy theory is also helpful in understanding the influences of the environment on the attitudes and choices of the participants. Bandura explained that young people's beliefs and cognitive schemas are developed through interaction with social and environmental factors, specifically by modelling the behaviours of others, particularly when they expect to be rewarded by doing them (Bandura, 1977). Living in a violent area like Hanover Park, the young people are exposed to many anti-social role models and they will often learn the behaviour which has been modelled for them and act out these aggressive behaviours in their relationships (Dodge

et al., 1994). Often there are few adults to model and positively reinforce pro-social behaviour, a lack of rewards for appropriate behaviour, and lowered future expectations of success based on what others in similar situations have been able to achieve, creating a very difficult environment to nurture children to adopt pro-social behaviour. However, as Bandura explains: “Behavioural inhibitions can be induced by seeing others punished for their actions” (p. 2). People have the cognitive capacity to solve problems without enacting the various alternatives and they can foresee the probable consequences of different actions and alter their behaviour accordingly.

The participants appear to have adopted behavioural inhibitions by observing the consequences for high-risk behaviour and altering their behaviours to more protective choices. The participants have also had a number of significant role models for pro-social behaviour in their lives. Their mothers have modelled agency, determination and goal orientation, under difficult circumstances, including poverty, illness and divorce, which the participants acknowledge and wish to emulate. This modelling may have encouraged the development of their internal qualities of a strong sense of personal agency, determination and hope for the future. Seeing their mothers take steps to improve their circumstances may have helped the participants to make conscious choices about their lives and develop the belief that they are able to affect change in their lives.

Furthermore, having had the benefit of a supportive, nurturing adult presence in their lives, as well as acknowledging the positive influence of having had good role models, the participants may understand the importance of having a nurturing, supportive relationship and good role models for younger children, particularly children who are vulnerable to being negatively influenced by gangsters looking to manipulate young people for their benefit. Therefore, as they were influenced by others’ choices in the community, in turn, they desire to become role models for the young children of Kids’ Club.

The results demonstrate evidence for the “cascade effect” in the lives of the participants (Luthar et al., 2006, p. 31), where the presence of certain factors has influenced other protective situations to occur in the participants’ lives. An example of this is where having a hard-working attitude at school may lead to the creation of positive relationships with teachers. For some participants, being involved in leadership positions at school has helped them to form supportive, encouraging relationships with teachers. Many of the participants were encouraged by their teachers to take up the leadership opportunities which CASE was

offering. In turn, being involved in the CASE programme has led to supportive relationships developing with the CASE adult mentors. Also the participants have formed supportive relationships with each other; participants mention observing some of the youth leaders becoming more pro-social in attitudes and behaviours while in the programme.

As the participants have a strong sense of agency, they are able to seek out opportunities which will further their goals in the future. They recognized that CASE was a resource with the potential for assisting them to learn skills and gain opportunities for self-growth and accepted the invitation to access this resource. In a similar way that they view their education as a resource which will help them toward an improved financial future with careers they enjoy, they saw that being at CASE was helping them, teaching them skills, giving them opportunities, to equip themselves for the future. This appeals to their feeling of agency and fuels their determination, encouraging their hope and future orientation. This agency encourages them to believe they have a purpose and will make a difference in their community. These findings of the protective influence of a strong sense of personal agency echo the findings in the South African literature which conclude that resilient children are able to demonstrate strong initiative and to take action to deal with the challenges they face (Bray et al., 2010; Ebersöhn, 2007, Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Govender & Killian, 2001; Mampane, & Bouwer, 2006; Pienaar et al., 2006; Theron, 2004; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005). The participants' actions and attitudes echo those found by local researchers, Mampane and Bouwer (2006), who describe their resilient participants as follows: "the participants knew what they needed and how to acquire it and viewed their problems as challenges that they had to overcome" (Mampane & Bouwer, 2006, p. 452).

The participants were influenced to join CASE by way of two main pathways. The majority of participants made the natural progression from being involved in leadership and development programmes at their schools and churches to joining the CASE youth programme. Four of the participants had been involved in gangs and had made the decision to end their involvement and join CASE when they experienced gang related trauma and realised the negative consequences of gang activities for themselves and the community. The themes which emerged concerning the initial motivations for joining CASE were: the opportunity to gain leadership and other enriching skills; wanting to make a difference to improve the community and wanting to keep themselves occupied and avoid high risk situations at home and on the streets of the community. The influences on the participants for

sustaining their long-term engagement with CASE were: learning skills, particularly leadership, communication and anger management skills; the positive influence the participants had on the younger children they worked with; benefitting from CASE being a safe place where they could avoid risk situations and enjoying the space where they could be accepted and receive emotional support. The final theme to emerge was that of the participants' resistance to the negative perception of their community and their frustration at the lack of action being taken to address the common problems. They also expressed their desire to see the community take responsibility for improving the quality of life of its residents.

Having examined the common individual characteristics and social experiences of the Youth-in-Action members, and their motivations for joining and maintaining their engagement with the programme, the next step concerns understanding how these qualities and experiences influenced them to make the choice to join and stay involved with CASE.

As intelligent, insightful young people, the participants appear to have recognised the opportunities that CASE could offer them in terms of increasing their skills and chances of employment. They are well aware of the danger of exposure to high-risk situations involved with living in a high-violence community, and saw the benefit of utilizing CASE as a safe place to spend their time after school, and accessing the activities to keep them occupied and off the streets. These actions are linked to their strong sense of agency; they took the initiative to join the programme as they believed in their power to contribute to a positive change in the community, particularly in the lives of the younger children. Their insight into the influence of older people on their own lives, helped them to recognize the importance of becoming positive role models for the younger children. Their qualities of hope and future orientation made them able to envision a more positive environment in the community. Their characteristics of empathy, care and the influence of their faith may have contributed to their desire to spend time helping the children and working on community upliftment projects. Their determination and discipline may have helped them to not be put off by the hard work involved in a community project of this nature. Their history of a strong, supportive bond with their mother or grandmother, as well as positive relationships with some favourite teachers, may have helped them to hope for, and seek out, other supportive relationships with adult mentors and be motivated to join CASE to gain benefit from the staff there.

5.3 Credibility of Findings

Three years after the interviews took place, a group interview was conducted with ten of the participants with the purpose of sharing the results of the data analysis with them and receiving feedback concerning the conclusions reached. This was done to improve the trustworthiness of the data (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Yardley, 2008). Five of the participants reported that they are still involved in full-time community service work. Three of the youth are working at an NGO called Hope, caring for the physically disabled and elderly and two are still involved in CASE programmes, namely the literacy and Youth programmes. One participant is an environmental education officer at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens and another is working with patients at Victoria Hospital. Five are studying and all but one is working. The emergent social and individual themes common to the majority of the interviews were explained to the participants, as well as the tentative interpretations and linking of the themes. The participants were encouraged to comment on everything, particularly if they disagreed with any interpretation or felt that anything had been omitted that they felt was important to an accurate understanding of their stories. However, having listened to the results, the participants did not add any new information during the process of the group, nor did they offer any alternate explanation to any theme. One comment summarized the feelings of the group regarding the acceptability of the results:

“Well I can say it sounds good. There are a lot of people who listens to people’s stories and they get misled by the story or they make another assumption which will gather more people to buy their book, but you actually stuck to the story and got what we wanted to share with you.”- Faizel

However, the participants did want to emphasize the importance of particular findings.

The participants emphasized the importance of their insight into observing the consequences of the choices of others in the community to their decisions to make different, more protective choices:

“Why I am who I am today is because I don’t want to be like my parents, or my daddy, or my cousins which is on drugs and alcohol...so I always strive for another route.” - Jared

“We was learning from the mistakes that others made” - Daniel

The participants also still strongly resist their perception of the stereotyping by outsiders of all community residents based on the most extreme risk behaviours found in the community. They demonstrated their sense of individual agency by refusing to be stereotyped and wanting to reclaim the positive aspects in their community.

“That’s something that I hate, when you go out and people ask you, where you’re from and you say Hanover Park and they’re like ‘Whhaat?’ That immediate change of their faces, like ooohyinna! we’re bad, you know what I mean. But when they look at you, they don’t see HP, when you speak they don’t see HP, but when you say you come from HP, then it’s just assumptions that’s being made about you, they make judgements about you, it’s something I hate with a passion. And I’m not scared to say I come from HP, definitely not, because I know there is a lot of good people in HP, there is people that makes a difference.” - Tracy

“People think that if you’re from the Cape Flats... I think people think we are uneducated , we are drug infested, we are alcoholics, ja as soon as people know where you’re from, their attitude changes, its like hold onto your bag.” - Jared

“I may come from Hanover Park but I don’t act like Hanover Park. Even though I come from ‘the hood,’ I don’t perceive myself as ‘the hood.’” - Abdul

They also reiterated the importance of having hope for achieving a goal and believing in their agency, their own power to achieve it.

“The importance of having a goal that drives you and having independent motivation: support from family is there, but... sometimes that is a bit shaky, so its just about having a goal, and to find your own way there”. - Faranaaz

The importance of taking responsibility for one’s own life was also emphasized:

“I don’t want to screw up my own life. I want to make myself a better person. I feel like I have to do it myself.” - Sherezahn

The participants affirmed that their mothers were one of the biggest sources of support to them doing well and reaching for opportunities to better themselves:

“Ja, my mommy, she was always my shining star, through everything. I won’t be where I am today without her” - Carrey

“My mom was always there, saying: try your best, you can do it.” - Ameera

The participants agreed with the interpretation that their feelings of self-confidence and hope may have been influenced by having supportive and loving adults in their lives, such as their mothers, teachers and mentors:

“The people that I’m with, who helped me through my journey, that’s very important.” - Jody

They further confirmed the role of teachers as an important source of support, and school being a safe place in a community where safe spaces are few:

“School is your home for most of the day and teachers recognize things in you and want to harvest them, so sometimes they can play a very important role.” - Ameera

“It’s important to have a school where you can feel safe to just learn, and study and be yourself. It’s not good to worry about shooting and things at school.” - Kim

The participants also emphasised CASE as being a safe place for them to grow and be contained and be among people with similar attitudes:

“I came to CASE to break away from stuff that was happening in the community and I was looking for a space where we could just be ourselves. - Antonio

“Fitting in with friends, like-minded people.” - Faizel

“(CASE) have supported me through some trials and personal things that have happened.”

They reported the Youth-in-Action programme as a place which encouraged a hopeful attitude and taught skills, increasing their sense of purpose and confidence:

“I feel like CASE helped me with a positive attitude, and people would always come to me for help and I would feel like I am reliable to people.” - Abdul

“I didn’t have the confidence that I gained while I was at CASE, like standing in front and teaching the children or running camps, I never thought I could do those things, ja I’ve gained a lot of confidence at CASE.” – Tracy

Finally, the participants wanted to reiterate what they perceived as their main motivation for involvement in the programme: their personal connection with the ideals of the organisation, which is working to help others in the community:

“I liked that being at CASE, we was doing what we was doing, not for just a job, but because of a passion for helping, and we loved doing it...because CASE was getting through to other people and making better people of them.” - Faranaaz

“I do what I do because it’s a passion, it’s a passion inside of me. I don’t do it for the money.”
- Tracy

Therefore the elements which the participants deemed as most important to shaping them into community activists three years after leaving the Youth programme were: their insight into the choices of others; their agency; the support of their mothers and teachers; the opportunity for interacting with pro-social peers and developing skills and confidence; and their care and responsibility for their community as encouraged by the Youth programme.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

This research has particular limitations. As this study has a qualitative design, the sample size was relatively small and was limited to a single leadership programme in a particular community in the Western Cape. The small sample size allowed for a more in-depth exploration of youth members’ experiences; however, it also limits the generalisability of the findings. As the study is required to be of limited length, the results section needed to be edited and decisions made regarding material to be included or excluded. For example, only themes described in at least three or more narratives were included when reporting results.

Additionally, during the analysis of the data, interpretations had to be made regarding coding of the themes into categories, as well as a limitation imposed on the number of quotes included to illustrate each theme. Illustrative quotes were kept to their original length wherever possible to retain the participant's original meaning and increase the trustworthiness of the research by indicating that the interpretations match the data (Whitehead, 2004). As there is very little current qualitative research in this area in South Africa with this kind of population, this study wanted to take a broad approach. The interview schedule with the framework of the 'life narrative as a book with chapters and characters' was chosen to be as non-directive as possible to allow the participants the opportunity to talk about whatever experiences they felt were most important to share with me. The participants enjoyed this structure and it appeared to work well to stimulate their memories. However, this schedule resulted in very broad data, covering many different experiences. Future research may want to explore the interactions of more specific factors.

The qualitative research perspective acknowledges the influence that the researcher has on the process of data collection and interpretation. Whitehead (2004) illustrates this view by guiding the researcher to be aware of "the potential effects of their personal and social characteristics on data collection" (Whitehead, 2004, p. 516). I, as the researcher, have very different personal characteristics to my sample of participants, and this interaction of different dynamics would certainly have an effect on what the participants chose to speak about and how they spoke. I am an older, white, female, English-speaking university student and this would have affected the way that the participants constructed their responses to my questions. Regarding language, the interviews were conducted in English, the researcher's first language and that of the majority of the participants, and it is also the medium of CASE. All the participants claimed to be very comfortable speaking English, however, the participants switch regularly between English and Afrikaans when speaking amongst themselves, and perhaps having to speak to me without the mixture of Afrikaans may have had the effect of reducing the clarity of meaning they were able to communicate to me.

From the participants' point of view, I was not a stranger to my participants, but someone they knew fairly well; as a counsellor and youth leader I had had many previous interactions with them. This would have had several effects on their responses. They were not shy about speaking to me as perhaps they would have been with a stranger, but were comfortable with me and very excited about sharing their experiences. However, as they know that I have been a volunteer for two years with CASE, they may have limited their responses to my questions

to include only their positive experiences of the programme, excluding any possible negative feelings, as they may have felt that I would not want to hear any criticisms of CASE.

However I also believe that my participants trust me, due to positive past experiences together, and I think that this trust encouraged them to speak to me honestly and at length about their personal difficulties and the challenges facing their community as they believed that I would faithfully capture their experiences and make them accessible to others who may be able to offer further assistance to support the community towards improving the quality of life for the residents.

Furthermore, my own background, experiences and assumptions would have had an effect on how I understood the participants' responses and what meaning I made of them. Reflecting on the research process, I know that I care very much for all the participants, having known them in a personal capacity as counsellor and youth leader, and am sure my understandings of their responses have been influenced by my feelings of warmth and hope for their individual success in life. It is certainly possible that the data may have been read and interpreted differently by a more 'objective' researcher, with fewer personal ties to the participants or the CASE programme.

Lastly, consideration must be given to the influence that their involvement with CASE may have had on the participant's meta-cognitive skills. I believe that the teachings and guiding principles which structure the CASE programme have certainly influenced the participants' impressive skills regarding their self-insight and insight into other community member's choices and experiences. The participants were exposed to many hours of activities and group discussions around the consequences of choices and creating and believing in one's dreams and goals for a positive future. This would have stimulated much reflection and interest and improvement of these skills in them. However, without a certain level of pre-existing intelligence, self belief and altruism these teachings would have fallen on deaf ears.

Therefore, mirroring the wider complexities of influences which combine to create a resilient outcome, the participants' protective meta-cognitive skills are the result of a very fortunate coming together of strengths and experiences at the right time, leading them to consciously desire to choose protective paths for themselves in an environment of multiple adversity.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research and for Resilience Development

Interventions

Future research should explore the experiences of youth from different leadership programmes in a variety of communities to gain a broader understanding of common characteristics and influences on young people demonstrating positive outcomes in disadvantaged communities. Longitudinal studies measuring whether resilient adolescents enter development programmes with pre-existing attitudes of critical consciousness or whether these attitudes develop as a result of being in the programmes may also be valuable to the resilience field. Furthermore, it may be valuable to examine the experiences of adolescents in the community who are not involved in youth development programmes to gain an alternate perspective from youth growing up in communities of multiple adversity.

This study did not formally measure the efficacy of the CASE youth programme, however, a few tentative recommendations for policy could be offered. The findings clearly show that the participants perceive that they have received significant benefits on a number of levels from being involved with CASE's youth programme. These benefits include a safe space, available counselling, the opportunity to form relationships with supportive staff members and pro-social peers, as well as the opportunity to learn skills to cope with living in contexts of adversity such as anger management and communication skills. In this way, the programme has encouraged the participants to make the most of their opportunities and supported them to develop hopeful, optimistic future expectations with a view to protect them against the risks of living in a community of multiple adversity.

Therefore, the intervention model of a positive youth development programme which occupies young people in the high-risk after-school hours, and which provides safe spaces and opportunities to enrich them, develop their leadership and communication skills and build hope and confidence in them, appears to be a valuable intervention in high-violence, low-resourced communities where at-risk youth need support. An aspect of the CASE intervention which appears from the findings of the study to work particularly well and deserves replication in future interventions, is the training of the adolescents to work with the younger members in the community. This interaction appears to help the adolescents to gain confidence and purpose and to improve their sense of personal agency and motivation. The importance of supportive teachers to at-risk youth cannot be overstated and therefore these findings emphasise the necessity of creating interventions which assist teachers in stressful

contexts to be able to provide youth with the emotional and academic support they need. The results of this study also point to the importance of good attachment relationships with parents and the influence of positive role models for young people in communities of multiple adversity. Therefore parent and teacher education interventions on these issues may prove valuable in bringing community adults' attention to the significant influence which positive role models who model pro-social norms and encourage hope, goal planning and determination can have on young people in these contexts of multiple adversity. Parenting support programmes and family strengthening programmes may be of particular value to the development of youth resilience, especially in contexts where single-parent households are common.

5.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study aimed to contribute to the gap in knowledge on resilience processes in the South African context. Theron and Theron (2010) have criticised South African resilience research in the past for simply creating 'laundry lists' of protective individual and social factors which are associated with positive outcomes amongst young people in adverse contexts. This study has researched a little further down this path by exploring resilience factors in a particular population and context, and by offering a tentative interpretation of the process in which the factors work together to produce resilient outcomes in the lives of these young people.

The findings of this study lend support to Masten's (2001) belief in resilience being 'an ordinary magic', that positive outcomes are most likely to occur when the ordinary contexts of children's lives are relatively stable and when their families, schools and friendship groups are able to carry out ordinary developmental tasks (Masten, 2001; Ungar, 2008; Ward et al., 2007).

Referring back to Michael Ungar's comprehensive understanding of resilience:

"In the context of exposure to multiple adversity, whether psychological, environmental, or both, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to

provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways”
(Ungar, 2006, p. 225).

In applying this definition to the findings, it was found that the participants were able to navigate their way to make the most of their community’s resources being that of supportive teachers, and the learning opportunities offered by CASE, to help them to achieve healthy outcomes such as self-confidence, skills and hope for the future. These resources appear to have included opportunities to experience well-being such as their confidence, hope for the future and sense of purpose and pride in helping the younger children. Additionally, their families, particularly their mothers, have provided health-sustaining resources in the form of material support and also warmth, emotional support and encouragement. Therefore, the assets in these young people’s lives were strengthened to improve the probability of their positive adaptation.

This study acknowledges that the interactions that create resilience in the participants’ lives are complex and dependent upon a variety of factors in a variety of combinations. However, the literature has identified many factors as common to narratives of resilience, and these may serve as a starting point to a large field of future research on this important area, particularly in South Africa at this time when there are many communities facing so much adversity. Therefore, further research is needed to gain a better understanding of the interactions between protective factors and risk elements and the processes of resilience in communities which produce positive outcomes among young people in South Africa. This knowledge would enable family and community strengths to be better supported and more effective interventions to be constructed to support young people to overcome the negative consequences associated with living in high risk environments.

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APPENDIX A: Participant Profiles

What follows are brief sketches of the lives of the ten girls and ten boys from the Youth-in-Action youth leadership group at CASE and a quote from each that I found particularly meaningful. I have given each teenager a pseudonym.

Girl One “No matter your situation at home, you can still strive to be a better person.”

Tracy is pretty with big green eyes and light brown skin. She is confident and friendly with a good sense of humour and a tendency to put on funny accents.

She is seventeen, in grade twelve and lives with her mother, and her older brother and sister. Her mother and father are divorced but lived together until last year. She has one brother and one sister and a half-brother. She is very outgoing and has many friends. She is a practicing Christian and has a good relationship with her youth pastor and his family. Her father works as a driver and her mother is a machinist in a factory. Her older brother did not finish matric and is unemployed and a drug user. Her father has a history of being abusive to her mother and has thrown his son out of the house. Last year her father tried to burn down their house with himself, her mother and brother inside it, sparing only her. He did not succeed but put her mother in hospital and was sent to jail.

She is a very intelligent girl, fluent in English and Afrikaans. She is well-liked by the teachers and likes them. She wants to study towards a career but she first would like to save money working as an air hostess for a few years. She plans to come back to the community as a professional and work with the children.

Girl Two “Ja my father is terrible, he’s a dragon in human skin”

Ameera is a very small, slim, lady-like Muslim girl. When we met at the offices and started to walk towards the interview room she immediately offered to help carry my bags. She needed no encouragement to start speaking about herself and her story poured out of her as she told me about her family and struggles.

She is seventeen, in grade eleven and lives with her father, mother, younger brother, older sister and her older sister’s husband and two children. Her life is dominated by her father who is emotionally and verbally abusive towards her and the rest of the family. He used to also be physically abusive to them but that has stopped to a large extent in the last few years. She is filled with so much pain about his behaviour and his attitude towards his family that she spent most of the interview talking about him.

She is a very intelligent girl who does well at school. She has two very close friends who support her and a few neighbourhood friends. She is such a naturally cheerful girl with a good sense of humour and an unexpectedly mischievous smile and is very optimistic about her future despite such a traumatising family life. She hopes to study at UWC to be an oral hygienist and one day a dentist. She dreams of leaving Hanover Park, buying her own house so she does not have to be dependant on a man, taking her mother and younger siblings to safety away from her father and marrying a man who will be good to her. She got involved with CASE because her sister is a CASE counsellor and encouraged her to join the youth group.

Girl Three “We love each other and we care and if there’s a problem you can talk to us”

Carrey is a tall, pretty girl with an easy smile and a care-free, adventurous air about her. She speaks with confidence and likes to laugh a lot.

She is sixteen, in grade ten and lives wither mother, two older sisters and her elder sister’s toddler. Her parents are divorced and her father has remarried. She does not have a close relationship to her sisters but she has a very close, supportive group of friends. She started peer counselling and joined CASE because she thought of it as a new challenge. She especially enjoys the Music, Art, Dance and Drama (MADD) group of the Youth-in-Action, with her friends liking to “go crazy and mad and dance in front of each other”. She is clever and good at school, although not doing so well at the moment, and talks about wanting to improve her marks. She is Christian and deeply involved with church activities including a church leadership group as well. She appears to be a warm, stable, happy girl who enjoys life.

Girl Four “On judgement day, God will judge”

Sherezahn is a small, plump girl with her two front teeth missing and a shy manner.

She is seventeen, in grade eleven and lives with her father, older brother and sister and her sister’s two children. Her mother died last year and she told me the story of her mother’s illness and death in detail. She is still in the process of deep mourning for her mother and was clearly in pain. The last year has been especially hard for her as she had lost both her grandmothers and her mother due to illness in a single month.

She appears to have a close relationship with her father and nieces which is a great comfort to her. She has taken over the responsibility for cooking for the family and cleaning the house and takes pride in being able to have done what her mother would have wanted her to do in keeping the family together and well looked after.

She is a Christian with a very strong faith and has strong opinions on what she feels is right and wrong. She dreams of becoming either a chef, a chartered accountant or a psychologist. I felt a special warmth towards this small girl with her strength and faith who had lost so much so quickly but who was doing her duty for her family so well.

Girl Five “Me and my mom have quite an open relationship, trusting each other.”

Jasmin is a pretty girl with a self-contained manner.

She is sixteen, in grade ten and lives with her mother, father and three older brothers and two younger sisters. She immediately starts talking about her brother who is involved with a gang and drugs and how difficult it has been for her family to cope with his behaviour. Her worst memory was when her favourite aunt was stabbed to death in a night club a few years previously.

She is very close to her mother and is determined to make her mother proud by making good choices in her life and achieving her goals. Her mother has been a very good role model by making good choices and her daughter wants to emulate her. She doesn't have many close friends but is close to her cousin who got pregnant, had the baby but finished matric and Girl Five was very impressed with her determination to finish school and still achieve high marks. She dreams of working in the tourism field, buying her own house and being independent. She got involved with CASE because she wanted to work with the children at Kid's Club, she loves children and wants to help them and give them a safe place to have fun.

She is very observant and comments on what she sees around her, determined not to make the same mistakes other people have made. I admire her intelligent observations and her determination.

Girl Six “Seeing change starting helps everyone realise they can change.”

Aashieqah is petite, pretty with very long hair, dimples and laughing eyes. She is well spoken and very self-aware, and makes intelligent observations on life.

She is nineteen, just finished matric and lives with her father, mother, younger sister and younger twin brothers. She was very close to her grandparents who passed away when she was in primary school. She was very popular at school and always had many friends and attention from boys. She was always in the top of her year and won many awards. In late high school her maternal grandmother passed away and she lost her motivation to do well at school. This led her to a time of experimentation with boyfriends and making new friendships. Her parents went through years of trouble in their relationship when her father was very controlling of her mother and her parents would verbally abuse each other. She is not close to them but has many good friends, especially among the youth leaders at CASE

who she can confide in. She loves being involved with CASE and considers it an important part of her identity. She especially enjoys working with the children, helping them to make good choices. She dreams of being an environmental educationist and coming back as a professional to help her community.

She is a very independent person who challenges the status quo in her environment, she is very quick and intelligent and curious about the way the world works. She has a mature outlook and is very caring about her community and empowering people to change their situations for the better.

Girl Seven (*My father*) “He’s on drugs, he’s in his own world.”

Nicole is a shy girl who hides behind her long fringe, she is tall and thin with a visible gold tooth.

She is seventeen, in grade eleven and she lives with her father’s mother. Her mother gave birth to her when she was sixteen and her parents later separated. Later on her mother married someone else but her father never married. Her mother had two sons with her husband but her husband then got involved with drugs and her mother left him and came back to live with her daughter and her grandmother. Her father also had two boys with other women. These children are all living in different areas. One of the first things she tells me is that her father is now also heavily into drugs after getting involved with a girlfriend who is a drug user. She does not have a close relationship with her mother who drinks and goes out to parties on the weekends. She failed grade eleven but has come back to school to repeat it.

She joined CASE through the encouragement of her grandmother who is a CASE trauma counsellor. She dreams of becoming an athletics coach, an air hostess or a hairdresser. She is a quiet, shy girl who does not say much but it is apparent how much she loves her grandmother, who is one of the only good influences in her life and who gives her hope and encourages her.

Girl Eight “we saw how life was going in Hanover Park and none of us wanted that life for ourselves.”

Rizia is of medium height with soft brown hair in a bob and has a quiet but preoccupied manner. She is the only girl who never relaxes during the interview but stays watchful and guarded.

She is eighteen, just finished matric and is the second of three girls who lives with her sisters and mother. Her parents divorced a few years ago after her father had an affair and he has now remarried his girlfriend. She is close to her mother who she admires for her strength in keeping the family together after the divorce but not close to her sisters. She has close

friends, especially from the CASE youth leaders group. She joined CASE because she wants to help in the community and especially with the children. She wants to become a teacher as she believes that teachers are very important to help disadvantaged children make good choices for themselves. She is an intelligent, observant person who is able to explain that the lack of good parenting is one of the root causes of the problems in Hanover Park.

Girl Nine “Just because you *come* from Hanover Park, doesn’t mean you have to be Hanover Park”

Faranaaz is a small, pretty girl with very white teeth and a big smile.

She is seventeen, in grade twelve and lives with her father, mother, older sister and two younger brothers. She talks about her happy family whose lives changed completely when her father became very distanced and cold towards the family after the death of her grandmother. It seems she lost her faith in people after that and was very hesitant to make close friends at school, rather choosing to concentrate on her school work and becoming a top student. She is Muslim and by her own description very devout and although she takes great comfort in her religion, she is aware that it separates her from many other people who judge and label her.

She is clever and ambitious and has been accepted to study English at UWC and her plan is to study teaching afterwards as she believes that teachers have a lot of power to help children and influence their lives in a positive direction. She has a very calm, confident manner and I can see that she will make a very good teacher one day.

Girl Ten “I suppose I am coloured, but I don’t like that word.”

Kim is a short and smiley, very confident and quite maternal to the other leaders.

She is seventeen, in eleven and lives with her mother and her mother’s boyfriend and her older brother and younger sister. Her mother and father married when her mother fell pregnant at sixteen but divorced four years ago. Her father has also remarried. She is close to her mother but doesn’t like her mother’s boyfriend who is very possessive toward her mother and unfriendly to her. She has a lot of support from her mother who encourages her to stay in school and doesn’t want her to make the same choices she did. She has a boyfriend and a group of close friends. She is Christian and is involved with her church youth as well.

She joined CASE because she saw joining the programme as a good opportunity to learn new skills and help the community. She wants to go to university and become a doctor or a lawyer so that she can help people and help to support her family.

Boys

Boy One “Education is the key to success.”

Adrian is short and stocky, a friendly, respectful boy with a quick smile.

He is sixteen, in grade ten and lives with his mother and two brothers in the servant’s quarters in the house where she is a domestic worker. His parents were never married and when his father left to go to the army she fell pregnant by another man. They separated and he married another woman. The family was originally from the Northern Cape and when his parents split up, his mother took his elder brother and went to Cape Town looking for work, leaving him with an aunt. He joined his family in Cape Town four years ago. He gets on well with all the members in his family and says his father does try to have a relationship with his sons and help them where he can.

He is Christian and religious and regularly takes part in church activities. He joined CASE because his brother had joined first and encouraged him to join too and has stayed because he realised that the leaders were better people to be friends with than the friends he had at that time. He dreams of becoming a game ranger because he loves animals and being in nature.

Boy Two “This boy, he stabbed me here in my back, I was for nearly a month in hospital.”

Tyron is tall and thin with a gold tooth, he smiles a lot but he is not relaxed, I feel he is anxious and does not know what to expect from the interview. He is willing to answer my questions but generally gives very short answers.

He is nearly seventeen but has not been in school for three years. He lives with his mother. His father is soon to be remarried. He has one sister who was on drugs and was sent to jail, but is now at Lentegour Hospital. His other sister does not live with them and he says that he does not like her. He is very close to his two cousins with whom, he spends a lot of time. He was briefly involved with a gang and used to drink alcohol and smoke dagga but has dropped out of the gang and stopped doing those things after counselling at CASE. He likes playing with the children in the Kid’s Club. He wants to be a hotel manager or a computer technician and own his own business with his cousin when he’s older.

Boy Three **“I like to make jokes, I like to laugh”**

Moegamat looks like the stereotype of a gangster, he has very low baggy jeans, a cap backwards and two missing front teeth. Although he looks very intimidating, he is friendly and ready to talk. He says he has looked forward to the interview.

He is seventeen, and was banned from school last year as a result of being involved in the gangs. He wanted to come back but the school would not let him. He would have gone to another school but his family does not have the money for transport costs.

He lives with his mother, two brothers, his aunt and his grandmother. His aunt is the only working member of the family. His mother had left him with his grandmother and gone to live with other people for a long time in his childhood but has returned recently. His parents were never married and split up soon after he was born. His father lives in the same block of flats as he does but he has little contact with him. He was involved with a big gang for two years but his friend who was also a gangster got him to agree to leave gangsterism and join CASE for a better life. He has made good friends with the CASE leaders and goes to a church youth as well. He regards his grandmother as his closest mother figure as she has been his constant support. He told me stories of life in the gangs, how violent it is and how many of his friends have been hurt. He tells me about how he has learnt about anger management skills in the workshops at CASE and this has helped him keep his temper and not lash out violently at others.

Boy Four **“I’m being a happy person like it feels like I’m open now, nothing is being kept inside”**

Jason is a good-looking boy with a cheeky face and adventurous air about him.

He is seventeen years old, in matric and lives with his mother and two younger brothers in servant’s quarters in the house where she is a domestic worker. His parents were never married and his father has remarried with three children. He has a good relationship with his mother and brothers and gets on with his father when he sees him. He started his own gang of boys in grade nine and then decided that he actually wanted to be a better role model for other children and with his new girlfriend, joined CASE. He wants to be his mother’s first child to matriculate as she had dropped out of school before matric, and then he wants to follow his father into the police service. He wants to help the community by ‘putting the gangsters and criminals in jail’.

Boy Five “I don’t want to be another gangster, I don’t want to die so quick.”

Daniel is a short, neat boy, appears reserved and thoughtful.

He is sixteen, in grade ten and lives with his mother, father, two sisters and a brother. He lost his second eldest brother in a car accident. His eldest brother is a drug addict and his youngest brother is a policeman. His eldest sister lives at home with a baby, his youngest sister is at university studying law. His uncle is a member of the notorious gang, the “Americans” and is in prison for shooting and killing his pregnant girlfriend.

He is very good at soccer and dreams of becoming a professional soccer player or a boiler maker and buying his own house. He enjoys being involved in CASE as he loves helping the children, providing a fun, safe place for them to play.

Boy Six “I want to be a role model to my family.”

Jody is a tall, very dark-skinned boy with intelligent eyes and a serious manner.

He is 19, has matriculated and having been in the CASE youth for five years, he now works for CASE as a youth coordinator. He lives with his mother, fifteen year old sister and a six year-old sister. His parents were both alcoholics and when he was young he was sent away to live with his grandparents. He came back to live with his mother years later. He remembers having to walk back from school to Manenberg at the age of eleven, a journey which took three or four hours every day as the family only had money for one taxi journey. His father, still an alcoholic, lives with his own mother and Jerome hardly ever sees him. He tells me how hard it was to grow up without his parents and to never have had a proper father figure.

He describes how important CASE has been in his life, how it gave meaning and purpose to his days and how he has gained a confidence and determination to have a different sort of life from the lives he sees around him in the community. He dreams of going into the army, having a family and being a good father.

Boy Seven “They are demotivated because they think coloureds won’t come anywhere in life.”

Abdul is of medium height, very skinny with small bright eyes and a friendly direct manner.

He is eighteen years old, matriculated last year and is studying an electrical course at a Technicon this year. He lives with his grandmother in Hanover Park. His mother, father, sister and baby brother live in Retreat. At the age of seven, his father, a gang member, was imprisoned for armed robbery and served eight years in jail. He grew up without his father

and now that his father has come out of jail and rejoined the family, he is not making an effort to have a relationship with his son which hurts Benjamin. He is a clever boy who did very well at school and was on the student representative council which is how he got involved with CASE. He makes very intelligent comments about the community and his understanding of it.

He joined CASE to gain guidance and leadership skills and dreams of getting married, having children and starting his own business.

Boy Eight “I just want to uplift young people in my community.”

Antonio is a small, short boy with twinkly eyes and a huge laugh.

He is eighteen years old and in grade twelve. He lives with his mother and two siblings, He has an older sister who has three of her own children and a brother who has seven children. He is the first child in his family who has made it into matric. His father left his mother when he was very young and he does not see him at all. He tells me how difficult it was to grow up without a father and can see that so many other children are in his situation and it has been very difficult for them. He joined CASE because he loves children and is very good with them, and loves to sing and dance and play with them. He has started his own informal support group called BFF (Bonding Family and Friends) and this has done extremely well, developing off-shoots into Mitchell’s Plain, Manenberg and Lavender Hill. He is very excited about developing this group and spreading its influence into other areas. He has a charismatic way of speaking and talks about his community work with a real passion. He dreams of becoming a motivational speaker and I have no doubt that he will achieve that.

Boy Nine “We try to teach them to be strong... we can teach them the right road.”

Faizel is a short, muscular boy with a halo of curly hair and an easy laugh.

He is seventeen, in grade twelve and lives with his mother and two brothers. His parents divorced five years ago. He sees his father regularly and has a good relationship with him. His mother is one of the CASE trauma counsellors and his second eldest brother is involved with teaching dance to the Youth-in-Action. He is very musical as well and has performed and sung in many school musicals. He is very dedicated to his schoolwork and achieves high marks. He talks about how he used to resent his mother for her strict parenting style but now acknowledges that she gave him the structure and discipline to do well in school and have the confidence and drive to make good plans for his future. He talks to me about his observation that too many children lead unstructured lives, their parents not caring about where they are and what they are doing. This, he says, leads them to not care about themselves and make bad choices in their lives.

Boy Ten “Change the kids so they don’t do the same thing as their parents.”

Jared is a very thin, shy boy with a sweet, friendly face.

He is eighteen, matriculated last year but is re-writing his maths and English exam so that he can improve his marks for an application to university. He lives with his mother and father and two sisters. The first thing he tells me is that he is very poor but his family survived by the help of others. His older sister has two children but she is a drug user which is very hard for the family to cope with as she is often neglectful of her children. He told me about finding primary school difficult as the children used to be nasty to him about being poor. He is very musical and is a very talented organist at his church and is learning the piano as well. He has a group of close friends who support him and he is grateful for having a good family who he says are responsible for him having a good character. He dreams about becoming a lawyer and leaving Hanover Park for a better place for his family to live in the future.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Tell me about being young and living in Hanover Park?
2. Tell me about your family and friends?
3. **Introduction:** I would like you to think of your life like it was a book, for example: ‘The Story of Tracy’ so far. Each part of your life is a chapter. The first chapter starts when you are born and runs until something quite important happens to you to change your life and that starts a new chapter. Can you put your life into a few chapters for me?
4. **Chapter 1:** Lets talk about Chapter 1: What is it called? A book needs a setting, can you tell me what your parents were doing, where they were living, when you were born? You are the main character in your story but who were the other characters in your story at the beginning? Can you remember anything clearly from when you were very young? What was the best memory from Chapter 1? What was your worst memory from Chapter 1? What is the change that leads to chapter 2?
5. **Chapter 2:** What is Chapter 2 called? Are the characters still the same? Any new characters? Is the setting still the same or is it different now? Tell me a clear memory from Chapter 2? What is the best memory from Chapter 2? What is the worst memory from Chapter 2? What is the change that leads to Chapter 3?
6. **Chapter 3:** What is Chapter 3 called? Are there any new characters? Is the setting different? Tell me a clear memory from Chapter 3? What is the worst moment from Chapter 3? What is the best moment from Chapter 3?
7. **Significant People:** Looking back on the last three/four chapters of your book, who are the four most important characters in your book? Tell me why?
8. **Challenges:** Most hero’s or heroines in stories have challenges to face, hard times that they must go through to get to the ‘Happy Ending.’ What do you think the difficult things are that your character had to face in your story? What helped you cope with those things? Chapter number 4 is still being written as you live it now, so what challenges are you still dealing with? How are you dealing with them?
9. **Future:** What do you think is going to happen in the next chapter of your story? What would you like to happen? In a few chapters time, how would you like the story to change? What would happen to the main character and the other characters? Will any new characters be introduced? What about the setting? Will it change from Hanover Park? Why? What are the hopes and dreams of this character?
10. **CASE:** Tell me about CASE? How did you get involved with CASE (if they haven’t mentioned it yet) What do the Youth-in-Action do? Do you think being in CASE has changed you? How? Do you think that Youth-in-Action and CASE are helping Hanover Park? How?

Why do teenagers join Youth-in-Action? Why do other teenagers not join it? How can we encourage other young people to join Youth-in-Action?

11. Are you Religious? If so, tell me about your faith in your life?

12. Any other comments you'd like to make?

APPENDIX C: PARENT CONSENT FORM

Youth leadership programme study

Dear Parent

The University of Cape Town, in partnership with CASE (Community Action for a Safer Environment), is conducting a research project into youth participation in community development organisations. **The aim of the project is to learn about the lives of the teenagers who are involved in the CASE Youth-in-Action programme.**

The project involves interviews of 2 hours each with teenagers aged 16-18 years of age. The interviews will not have specific questions but will ask the young person to talk generally about their lives.

The information that we will get from the interviews will tell us how to help CASE and other youth development organisations get more young people to join the organisations and therefore help more young people in their personal growth and to be better members of the community.

Confidential: The interview will be recorded on an audio digital recorder and the information stored on a computer under a password. The names of the young people will not be attached to their interviews so that what they say will never be traced back to them.

Referrals: If I am concerned about something that a child tells me, or the child becomes upset by the stories that they are telling in the interview, I will stop the interview immediately and tell them where they can get counselling to help them. I will refer them to the MountView school counsellor, or to a CASE counsellor outside the school; to ChildLine Crisis Line or to the Hanover Park Clinic.

Participation in the project is voluntary. This means that your child may choose not to participate in the interview or can stop the interview and leave at any point. If you will allow your child to participate in this study please would you sign below:

Name:

Parent of:.....

Signature:.....

If you have any further questions please contact me or my supervisor.

Interviewer : Ros Veitch
Email: ros_veitch@yahoo.co.uk
Telephone: 079 634 8952

UCT Supervisor: Dr Debra Kaminer
Email: Debbie.kaminer@uct.ac.za
Telephone: 021 650 3425

Thank you!

APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT ASSENT FORM

CASE: Youth-in-Action study

What is this study about?

This project is studying the reasons why some teenagers want to join youth groups and others do not. You have been chosen from the CASE youth group to tell us about yourself and what made you choose to be in the Youth-in-Action.

Do I have to take part?

You **do not** have to take part in the interviews if you do not **want** to. You can also stop the interview at any time. You will not get into trouble if you do not want to be interviewed.

Will what I say be kept private?

Yes. Everything you say will be seen only by other researchers and your name will be removed from your interview and it will be given a number instead, so nobody will know what **you** tell us. The interview will be recorded on a digital audio recorder and transferred to a computer where it will be stored securely with a password.

What if I need help after the interview?

If you tell me someone is hurting you, I will find people and organisations that will help you.

Why should I take part in this study?

Your stories will help us to support young people to join youth organisations and to help youth organisations to improve their services so that more young people will want to join them and to have the opportunity to have fun, learn, grow as a person and help the community.

If you would like to be part of the research and take part in an interview, please sign this form below:

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Thank you!